

-THREE-PENCE-

The LUDGATE MONTHLY



Contributions
BY
LUKE SHARP,
LIONEL MAPLESON,
F. E. HARMAN,
etc., etc.,
and Song by
Edward Oxenford.

83 ILLUSTRATIONS



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October, 1891.



FLORILINE

FOR THE TEETH & BREATH.

Is the BEST LIQUID DENTIFRICE in the World.

Prevents the Decay of the Teeth.

RENDERS THE TEETH PEARLY WHITE.

Removes all Traces of Tobacco Smoke.

Is partly composed of Honey, and Extracts from Sweet Herbs and Plants.

IS PERFECTLY HARMLESS & DELICIOUS TO THE TASTE.

Of all Chemists and Perfumers throughout the World, 2s. 6d. per Bottle.

FLORILINE TOOTH POWDER

Put up in Glass Jars, Price 1s.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN DRUG COMPANY, Ltd.,
33, FARRINGDON ROAD, LONDON, Proprietors.

POSITIVELY THE BEST HAIR DRESSING.

EDWARDS'

"HARLENE"

WORLD-RENOUNDED

HAIR PRODUCER

AND

RESTORER.



AFTER USE.



AFTER USE.

Positively forces Luxuriant Hair, Whiskers and Moustachios to grow heavily in a few weeks, without injury to the Skin, and no matter at what age.

The World-renowned Remedy for **BALDNESS** from whatever cause arising. As a **PRODUCER** of WHISKERS and MOUSTACHIOS it has never been equalled. As a **CURER** of WEAK or THIN EYELASHES, or **RESTORING GREY HAIR TO ITS ORIGINAL COLOUR, NEVER FAILS.**

Physicians and Analysts pronounce it to be perfectly harmless and devoid of any Metallic or other Injurious Ingredients.

1s., 2s. 6d., 3s. 6d., and 5s. 6d. per Bottle, from Chemists, Hair Dressers, and Perfumers all over the World, or sent direct, on receipt of 1s. 6d., 2s. 10d., 3s. 11d., and 6s. Postal Orders preferred.

MANUFACTURED ONLY BY

EDWARDS & Co.,

5, NEW OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W.C.

Special Offer to Readers of THE LUDGATE MONTHLY.

A 5s. 6d. TRIAL BOTTLE FOR 3s.

We bind ourselves to send to any reader of THE LUDGATE MONTHLY who sends us this Coupon, with a Postal Order for 2s. and 6d. to cover postage, package, etc., one regular 5s. 6d. Bottle of Edwards' Instantaneous HARLENE, provided it is ordered within one month from date of Coupon. We make this offer solely for the purpose of making our speciality more widely known, without expending enormous sums in advertising, feeling sure that once having tried HARLENE you will never give up its use for any other preparation. By this offer the public reap the benefit. Address all orders with Coupon. Dated October 1st, 1901.

NOV 1 1901

Coupon.



Harness' Electro-pathic Belts are very comfortable to wear, and the mild continuous currents of electricity which they imperceptibly generate naturally and speedily invigorate the debilitated Constitution, assist digestion and assimilation, giving strength to every nerve and muscle of the body, and effectively preventing chills and rheumatic pains, which so many people are, unfortunately, subject to in this country, where the climate is so changeable. It seems, and is, a simple remedy; but it is as sure as it is simple, and the number of unsolicited testimonials we have received from all classes of society amply prove that we do not exaggerate when we say that **Harness' Electro-pathic Belts** have completely cured thousands of men and women in all parts of the world, most of whom had obtained no relief from medicine, and many of them had been pronounced by their family doctors as positively "incurable."

MEN'S SUFFERINGS.

MEN to whom life is a burden, who have lost hope, and have resigned themselves to an existence of secret misery and silent suffering, should know that peace of mind and body is still within their reach, and all the distressing symptoms of impaired vitality and lost vigour may yet be overcome if they will stop taking poisonous "pick-me-ups" and quack medicines, and adopt Mr. Harness's world-famed Electropathic treatment. During the past ten years this safe, pleasant, and rational method of cure has given new life and vigour to thousands of men whose obstinate cases had been pronounced by the faculty as "perfectly hopeless." All therefore who are in search of health are invited to call without delay at the Electropathic and Zander Institute, 33, Oxford Street (at the corner of Rathbone Place), London, W., where the President, Mr. C. B. Harness, and the other officers of the Medical Battery Company (Limited), may be consulted without charge, either personally or by letter. Experience having taught them that, in the treatment of intricate and obscure affections—often of a most private character—nervous delicacy has prevented some of their patients from giving full information regarding their symptoms and past habits, the Company urgently recommend those seeking the advice of their consulting officers to describe their cases freely and without reserve. All communications are, of course, regarded as strictly private and confidential. There are at the present moment many members of the English nobility, as well as naval and military officers, wealthy merchants, and others who gratefully bless the day they discarded prejudice and placed themselves under the care of the experienced medical electricians and trained operators of the Electropathic and Zander Institute, whose skill has transformed many a debilitated man from a miserable, morbid invalid, into a healthy, vigorous member of society. Gentlemen who are anxious to enjoy the many pleasures which come within the reach of the upper classes, but which can only be appreciated when accompanied by the greatest of all blessings—health of mind and body—should call to-day, if possible, or write at once, for a descriptive illustrated pamphlet and book of testimonials. The Company's only address is the Electropathic and Zander Institute, 33, Oxford Street, London, W., which is the largest electro-medical establishment in the world.



THINGS ONE WOULD RATHER HAVE LEFT UNSAID.

MISS JOLLITZ: But really, you should not be afraid of lightning, Mr. Tompkins; you know it only strikes attractive bodies.

KEATING'S POWDER.

The PUBLIC are CAUTIONED that packages of the genuine powder bear the autograph of THOMAS KEATING.

KILLS BUGS,
FLEAS,
MOTHS,
BEETLES,
MOSQUITOES.

HARMLESS TO ANIMALS.

HARMLESS TO ANIMALS.

KILLS BUGS,
FLEAS,
MOTHS,
BEETLES,
MOSQUITOES.

Sold in Tins, 6d. and 1s. each, everywhere.



THE BROKEN ONE.

LADY: What's the matter, my little man?

BOY: Leander Binks giv my girl half an orange, an' she's run off with him.

LADY: Oh, never mind, you can soon find another sweetheart.

BOY: Nay, nay! sweet lady. Wedlock is not for me; my only hope is to fill an early grave.



UNFORTUNATE.

BROGAN: Arrah, begob! Jist mol luck; another wake at Pagan's an' ol haven't got over the last wan yit.

The Favourite Confection.

WORLD-WIDE SALE.

SKUSE'S HERBAL TABLETS

Prepared from the Finest Aniseed, Horehound, Coltsfoot, Marshmallow, and other choice Herbs.

Sold everywhere in 3 oz. tins, 3d. Three, post free, 1s.

WORKS:

106, PRAED STREET, W.

THOMSON'S "Glove-Fitting" CORSET.

PERFECTION! Sold by all Drapers. One million pairs annually.



PRICE—
D 10/6 F 6/6
E 8/6 G 5/-

Black 1s. extra.

Approved by the whole polite world.

NINE FIRST MEDALS.

If your Draper cannot supply you write direct to 49, OLD BAILEY, LONDON, giving size, and enclosing P.O.O., and the Corset will at once be sent you.

W. S. THOMSON & CO., LTD., MANUFACTURERS.

Made in Lengths, 13, 14, and 15 inch.



Delicious New Perfume.

CRAB APPLE BLOSSOMS

(EXTRA-CONCENTRATED).

"It is the daintiest and most delicious of perfumes, and in a few months has superseded all others in the boulevards of the grandes dames of London, Paris, and New York."—The Argonaut.

300,000 BOTTLES SOLD LAST YEAR.

Made only by the

CROWN PERFUMERY CO., 177, New Bond St., W.

Sold Everywhere.

A GOOD HEAD OF HAIR



Is a charming and necessary addition to every person, no matter in what rank of Society they are in. How to get and keep it has often puzzled many, and the nostrums so largely advertised now, only tend to make them disgusted after use. **BARRY'S TRICOPHEREOUS** has been before the public in America for over 100 years, and, to-day, has the largest sale of any preparation of its kind in the world. There is not a civilised country where it cannot be found, not through advertising, but simply by recommendation from those who have tried and approved of it. With regular use

**IT IS ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEED TO
MAKE THE HAIR THICK, LUXURIANT, AND GLOSSY.**

TO PREVENT THE HAIR FALLING OUT.

TO REMOVE DANDRIF AND SCURF.

IT WILL PREVENT AND CURE
BALDNESS,

THE HAIR GETTING THIN,

ALL SCALP DISEASES.



TO REACH THE COLOSSAL SALES

OF 3,000 BOTTLES PER DAY, the Preparation must have some merit, and if further proof were required to certify to this, it is only necessary to say that scores of testimonials have been received from every country under the sun.

have been received from every country under the sun.

ADVERTISEMENTS.



Prof. Barry's Tricopherous was not a discovery of chance, but the result of long and laborious scientific investigation. He began at the beginning and worked up step by step until he accurately ascertained the component parts of the hair structure. This enabled him to compound a chemical equivalent, which, if applied to the scalp according to directions will not only prevent the hair from falling out, but will, when it has fallen out, supply with mathematical exactness, that with which nature at first fostered its growth, and thereby cause it again to sprout up and grow with just as much certainty as that seeds cast into the ground will, in due time, produce a crop of their kind.

From the COUNTESS of ELGIN.

Government House, Quebec.

To PROFESSOR BARRY.

DEAR SIR,—I am instructed by the Countess of Elgin, now in Scotland, to request you to send her, per Canada Express, four boxes of your Barry's Tricopherous for the Hair, with the view of its being sent to England with the Earl of Elgin's other effects. As his Lordship's stay here may be short, please forward it at your earliest convenience. Lady Elgin also desires me to enquire if you have an agent in Britain for the sale of your Tricopherous, as her Ladyship and family connections highly approve of it.

I am, DEAR SIR, &c.

AL. McEWAN,

Secretary to his Excellency the Earl of Elgin.

TO ENSURE ITS HAVING A FAIR TRIAL

We are prepared to send, post free, to everyone cutting out and forwarding the Coupon at foot, within two months from this date, a 3/- Bottle for 2/-, or 3 bottles for 5/6, on receipt of Stamps or Postal Order. Nothing can be fairer than this offer, and we are equally confident that having once used it no lady will have any other.



This Coupon entitles holder to one 3/- bottle of BARRY'S TRICOPHEROUS, post-free for 2/-, providing it is received within two months of this date—October, 1891.
"THE BARCLAY COMPANY," 15, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.



"THE BARCLAY COMPANY," 15, ST. BRIDE STREET, LONDON, E.C.



APPLIED SCIENCE.

PROFESSOR PUOWIG: Be calm: a bee can sting only once in two minutes.

BOY: Once is enough for me. You may have the second one.



NOT SUCH A FOOL AS HE LOOKS.

CHIEF (to young lady who has come ashore for a ramble): Young woman, I don't wish to be inhospitable, but you must leave here immediately. If my wives were to see your costume, my future life would be a never-ending misery.

WOULD YOU RATHER BE A BOY OR A GIRL?

£1 1 0 for best Answer.

0 10 6 „ 2nd best.

0 5 0 „ 3rd „

NEW PRIZE COMPETITION FOR LADIES ONLY.

Full Particulars are given in

The WEDNESDAY JOURNAL for September 9th,

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Any Newsagent will get this for you, or a Copy sent free for Three Half-penny Stamps by the Publishers, 6, ST. BRIDE STREET, LONDON.

COMPETITION CLOSES OCTOBER 7.

DO YOU SUFFER FROM CORNS?
 THEN USE
ALLCOCK'S
CORN PLASTERS.

THEY AFFORD IMMEDIATE RELIEF.

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HAVE YOU BUNIONS OR ENLARGED TOE JOINTS?

USE

ALLCOCK'S
BUNION PLASTERS.

They give EASE AT ONCE, and are far superior to any remedy of a similar kind.

Ask your Chemist for them, or send 1s. 1½d. in stamps to
 22, HAMILTON SQUARE, BIRKENHEAD.

GIVING THINGS AWAY.

"Did you ever know a trade built up by giving things away?" quoth the managing director of a large and successful business, and he immediately proceeded to answer his own question by saying, "I never did." Well, notwithstanding this adverse expert opinion, the dissuasion of friends, and the bugbear of expense, we decided to make the free gift of post-paid samples a feature in our business. We believed there to be instincts of fair-play, of discrimination, and recognition of fair dealing in the public mind which had hitherto never been properly gauged nor appreciated. We had one influential business adviser who favoured our plans. "You have a good thing," said he, "and your article is its own best advertisement." These two sentences, indeed, pithily embodied our own views and belief, and they have received the best of all possible endorsements, viz., SUCCESS.

We commenced this new method of business in a comparatively small way, inserting our advertisements in a few papers only to start with. The very next day after the first advertisement appeared twenty-six persons applied for gratis and post free samples of Frazer's Sulphur Tablets, and from that day—now some 2½ years ago—to this upwards of Five Hundred Thousand (500,000) persons have applied and been supplied with the free samples.

Immediately after we commenced despatching samples to the stream of applicants whose letters began to flow in with increasing volume by every post, we began to experience favourable returns and results. Frazer's Sulphur Tablets, when seen and tested, were highly approved, and recognised to be as good as we said they were. Then orders began to pour in direct from the public themselves, and also through the wholesale drug dealing houses from whom chemists and medicine vendors obtain their supplies of medicine, and the sale has gone on increasing ever since, and it has now been necessary to form a limited liability company to provide the necessary capital to cope with the rapid and continuous growth of the business.

SULPHUR—the basis of Frazer's Sulphur Tablets—is chemically described as a non-metal, and has a medicinal repute stretching away back almost to the days of Moses. It has, however, never been used to the extent it ought to have been, mainly because of its hitherto unpalatableness, and because it is so familiar and inexpensive. Doctors are apt to run after new

drugs, and to conclude that the more expensive medicine is, the better it must be; than which a greater fallacy never existed. Now we don't claim to be able to cure all and every ill that flesh is heir to with Frazer's Sulphur Tablets; very far from it. What we do claim is that Frazer's Sulphur Tablets are a sure and beneficent blood-purifying and skin-cleansing remedy. They are invaluable in the curative and preventive treatment of Fevers, whether Typhoid Typhus, Scarlet or Malarial; and to ward off, cure, or palliate attacks of Measles, Small-pox, and other infectious or epidemic disease, they have no equal in the whole field of medicine. They secure almost invariable immunity from attack in the midst of contagious disorders, from the effluvia of bad draining, decomposing vegetable matter, &c.; or, at the worst, the patient will have but a mild type of the disease. Their agreeable primrose hue and pleasant taste, allied to their great efficacy, make Frazer's Sulphur Tablets a gentle, safe, and sure laxative medicine for children. They are compact, pure, and harmless, and may be carried in the pocket to be taken at will. For ailing or disorganized women they are invaluable, as they may be taken at all times without repugnance or injury to the most delicate constitutions.

Acrid and other morbid or noxious elements in the blood are neutralised or ejected by the action of Frazer's Sulphur Tablets. The Tablets are therefore in the highest degree beneficial in Rheumatic Attacks, and in kindred complaints, Rheumatic Fever, &c. They modify pain, and give greater freedom and health to the limbs.

Frazer's Sulphur Tablets cleanse the skin from Eruptions, Eczema, Blackheads, Scorbatic and Scrofulous ailments by effecting an alterative effect in the blood, thereby ensuring purity and strength of flow, by which the blood is enabled to draw to itself more of the nutritive properties of food secreted from the stomach than can possibly be the case when it is impure. This alterative process, therefore, ensures strength, improved digestion, steadier nerves, and a clearer brain.

TEST THEM FREE OF CHARGE.

Samples of FRAZER'S SULPHUR TABLETS will be sent gratis and post-free on application. Name "The Ludgate Monthly." Frazer's Sulphur Tablets are sold in packets, price 1/11 (post free 1/3), and are for sale by Chemists and Medicine Vendors. Sole Proprietors, Frazer's Tablets, Limited, 11, Ludgate Square, London, E.C.

A GENUINE PRIZE COMPETITION



FOR

LADIES ONLY.

ANY LADY CAN COMPETE.



FIRST PRIZE **£10** FIRST PRIZE
SECOND PRIZE **£5** SECOND PRIZE
THIRD PRIZE **£1 1s.** THIRD PRIZE

THE SANITARY WOOD WOOL COMPANY, LIMITED, offer the above Prizes to Ladies for the best suggestions of the most delicate and effectual means of advertising, and bringing before the notice of ladies, their

HARTMANN'S HYGIENIC WOOD WOOL DIAPERS.

Competitors will notice how difficult an article this is to advertise and make thoroughly known, and encouraged by the testimonials we have received from the medical profession and nurses, we now offer the above prizes.

RULES.

The Competition is restricted to ladies, and will close on the 15th October, 1891.

Competitors may only send in one answer, and must give their full name and address; and the winners' names will not be published without their consent.

Envelopes must be addressed to THE MANAGERESS with PRIZE COMPETITION on left hand top corner.

Three experienced advertisers will judge for us as to which are the best results sent in.

Further particulars of the Competition, as well as a Sample of the article, will be sent free of any charge on application.

Address—Prize Competition, The Manageress,
THE SANITARY WOOD WOOL COMPANY, LIMITED,
26, Thavies Inn, Holborn Circus, London.



HARTMANN'S

(Sample free on application.)

(HYGIENIC WOOD WOOL) DIAPERS.

Soft and Antiseptic.

INVALUABLE AT HOME & INDISPENSABLE TO LADIES TRAVELLING.

Made in 3 Sizes.

6d. Packet of 1 dozen packed in White Paper. 1s. 4d. Packet of 1 dozen packed in Blue Paper.
1s. 0d. Packet of 1 dozen packed in White Paper. 2s. 0d. Packet of 1 dozen packed in Gold Paper.

To be obtained of all Ladies' Outfitters, Drapers, and Chemists.

Sample Packets of 1 dozen post free for 1/3, 1/7, and 2/3, or 6 dozen for 6/6, 8/6, and 12/6, with descriptive circular containing testimonials from the principal Hospitals, and Leading Members of the Medical profession. Address—

THE MANAGERESS, THE SANITARY WOOD WOOL COMPANY, LIMITED,
26, Thavies Inn, Holborn Circus, London, E.C.



**BARRY'S
PEARL
CREAM**
for the
COMPLEXION

Imparts to the darkest skin a clear, natural white tinged with the faintest rose-blush. Speedily removes Wrinkles, Freckles, Sunburn and Tan, and restores the faded cheek with youthful bloom and beauty. If not obtainable of your Chemist send P.O. or stamps for 2/9 to "THE BARCLAY COMPANY," 15, St. Bride Street, London, E.C.4, and a bottle will be sent per return of post.

This preparation is guaranteed to contain no injurious ingredients, and therefore may be used with perfect safety. It is beautifully perfumed and is sure to give satisfaction. **BARRY'S PEARL CREAM** is most efficacious in softening the skin and preventing its chapping, and in removing irritation arising from changes of weather. Be sure the name "BARCLAY & CO., New York" is on every bottle.

FIELDS

OZOKERIT

CANDLES

J. C. & J. FIELD, Ltd., LAMBETH, S.E.



A REASONABLE DEMAND.

SHE: No! Mr. Harding, it can never be. But I will always be a sister—

He (rising): Oh, that's the deal, is it? Well, then, sister, if you've got your thimble handy, I wish you would sew up the knees of my trousers that I have sacrificed in finding out our relationship.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES IN THE AUGUST NUMBER.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1.—Because it contains a merry thought. | 3.—Marriage. | 5.—Because it makes an |
| 2.—When it is a-jar. | 4.—When he reflects. | ass pass. |

Fifty-three Competitors answered all the Riddles correctly, and the Competition Editor has awarded the Prizes to the following:—

PRIZE WINNERS.

- 1st.—Rev. E. P. WEBER, Sheepwash Vicarage, Highampton, North Devon.
 2nd.—ALEXANDER SCOTT, 72, Main Street, Tollcross, Glasgow.
 3rd.—P. P. SHEEHAN, 93, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin.
 4th.—JAMES RICHARDSON, Inland Revenue, Menstrie by Stirling, N.B.
 5th.—SELINA BICKERS, 74, Nortland Street, Exeter.
 6th.—Mr. STANDING, High Street, Rickmansworth, Herts.

WINNER OF CRICKET COMPETITION (JULY).

The GOLD WATCH for July has been won by Mr. A. R. LANE, Grove Villa, Grove Lane, Liverpool.

The Winner of August Cricket Competition will be given in our next Number.

AUGUST WORD COMPETITION.

Several persons tied in this Competition with 16 words each, using all the required letters once, and only once; and the six Prizes are awarded to the following Competitors:—

Miss RITA ROBBINS, 56, Gore Road, Victoria Park, London.
 E. JEAYS, 25, Berners Street, Leicester.
 P. P. SHEEHAN, 93, Lower Baggot Street, Dublin.

R. WATERHOUSE, 30, London Road, Sheffield.
 B. H. WARRISS, Brigade Office, Shorncliffe Camp, Kent.
 Miss K. SHIRLEY WILLIAMS, 66, Oakfield Road, Anerley, S.E.

Ready 10th November, 1891.

THE LOST DIAMONDS.

A Story of thrilling interest, by

FLORENCE MARRYAT and CHARLES OGILVIE.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

224 Pages, well Printed, and COPIOUSLY ILLUSTRATED.
 BOUND IN STIFF COVERS.

THE LOST DIAMONDS will be the first Volume of a Series of Novels by first class Authors, to be Published by The Ludgate Publishing Company, as "THE LUDGATE LIBRARY," at the popular price of One Shilling.

THE LOST DIAMONDS

Will be Ready, 10th November, 1891.

Ready, October 15th.

COVERS FOR BINDING THE FIRST SIX MONTHS' NUMBERS,

Handsomely Printed on Pale Lemon Cloth in Black and Gold.

PRICE 1s., OR FREE BY POST, 1s. 3d.

Can be Ordered through your Newsagent or Bookseller.

CLOTHED WITH AIR.

CELLULAR CLOTH is composed of small cells, in which the air is enclosed and warmed by the heat of the body. A perfect non-conducting layer is thus formed next the skin. Owing to the *Cellular* construction this cloth is much lighter and better ventilated than ordinary fabric, and is easier to wash. *Cellular* cloth is made in cotton, silk, silk and cotton, and merino.

CELLULAR DRESS AND DAY SHIRTS.
CELLULAR NIGHT SHIRTS.
CELLULAR PYJAMAS.
CELLULAR VESTS AND PANTS.
CELLULAR UNDERWEAR FOR LADIES.
CELLULAR CORSETS.

Illustrated price list, with names of 160 country agents, sent post free on application. A complete assortment of Stock at

OLIVER BROS., 417, OXFORD STREET, LONDON, W.
ROBERT SCOTT, 14 & 15, POULTRY, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON, E.C.



RETURNING FROM THE HONEYMOON.

Mrs. YOUNG: Won't you put away your paper now, and talk for a while, Jack?

Mr. YOUNG: Yes, my love. Just wait till we get to the tunnel.



"I heard Mrs. Fisher say she wouldn't mind marrying that young man of yours."

"I'll never give her the chance. The man a widow would marry is pretty sure to make a good husband."

NEW NOVEL.

At all Railway Bookstalls, Libraries, &c.

NOW READY,

In Stiff Paper Cover, price 1s.,

"PERIWINKLE,"

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Wild Warringtons," "Gladys Arden's Disloyalty," &c.

REDUCTION OF GAS BILLS.

The "Ewart" GAS CONTROLLER.

Particulars at the

"LIGHTNING" GEYSER FACTORY:
 346, 348, 350, Euston Road,

Between the Gower St. and Portland Rd. Stations
 of the Metropolitan Railway.

A WONDERFUL MEDICINE.



If
Love
rules Court,
and Camp, and
Grove,
And Health, again, crowns
rosy Love,
Then BEECHAM'S PILLS, it
must befall,
By ruling Health,
will rule us all.

WORTH A GUINEA A
BOX.

BEECHAM'S PILLS

ST. HELENS
ENGLAND

Prepared only, and sold Wholesale, by the Proprietor, THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere, in Boxes, 9½d., 1s. 1½d., and 2s. 9d. each. Full directions with each box.

WM. POLSON'S CORN FLOUR.

The ORIGINAL and FIRST MANUFACTURED in GREAT BRITAIN.

Manufacturer by Special
Appointment to



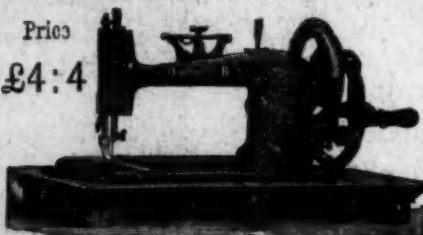
HER MAJESTY THE
QUEEN.

USED IN THE QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD FOR MANY YEARS.

WM. POLSON & CO.,
PAISLEY AND LONDON.

THE AMERICAN 'DOMESTIC' HAND SEWING MACHINE.

Price
£4:4



Self-Setting Needles. Self-Adjusting Tensions. Powerful Feed.
Plenty of Room under Arm and Presser Foot. Adjustable
Shuttle, entirely Self-Threading. Very Large Bobbins, holding
upwards of Fifty yards of Cotton. Loose Pulley for Winding
Bobbins.

Nickel Plated and Ornamented, and complete with Cover, and the
following accessories:—

12 Needles, 3 Hemmers, Quilter, 8 Bobbins, Guide and Screw, Oil
Can (full of Oil), Screw Driver, and Instruction Book. Special
Packing Box 2/-; Table and Stand for above, 32/-; with Two
Side Drawers, 44/6.

Liberal Discount for Cash. Write for fuller Particulars
and Prospectus of our other Styles.

PRICE £4:4

AMERICAN DOMESTIC SEWING MACHINE COMPANY, ST. BRIDE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

"BY a thorough knowledge of the natural laws which govern the operations of digestion and nutrition, and by a careful application of the fine properties of well-selected Cocoa, Mr. Epps has provided our breakfast-tables with a delicately-flavoured beverage which may save us many heavy doctors' bills. It is by the judicious use of such articles of

EPPS'S (GRATEFUL, COMFORTING) COCOA

diet that a constitution may be gradually built up until strong enough to resist every tendency to disease. Hundreds of subtle maladies are floating around us ready to attack wherever there is a weak point. We may escape many a fatal shaft by keeping ourselves well fortified with pure blood and a properly nourished frame."—*The Civil Service Gazette.*

Ebonite Blacking
WATERPROOF
for
BOOTS
SHOES

S & H HARRIS
EBONITE BLACKING



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"THE ELIXIR IS AS RED AS BLOOD!" DR. RUTHERFORD EXCLAIMED.



By D. F. HANNIGAN.

None of those quaint-looking, cage-work houses, of which only a few decaying specimens now remain in Dublin, lived Doctor Humphry Rutherford. He was so old, that no person born within the past three generations could form even a general estimate of his age. He lived apart from society, and wore a costume that brought the minds of those who saw him back to the days when Jonathan Swift was still an infant in arms.

He was, indeed, a queer old man; and no wonder that some of his poorer and more superstitious neighbours regarded him as a restless ghost who had come back to re-visit the scenes of his former life. That old-fashioned peruke, those curious-looking shoe-buckles, those ruffles re-calling the reign of Charles the Second, had nothing in common with the latter half of the nineteenth century; and so, if most people avoided him as something weird, uncanny, and phantom-like, they were, after all, only acting upon one of the most universal and deeply-rooted instincts of human nature.

This strange old personage had only one servant, who, curiously enough, was of foreign extraction. His features were of a tawny hue, and there was something of the Zingari about his entire appearance. He

was far from being as old as the Doctor; and yet his thick hair was quite white, and his dark skin was creased with wrinkles. The name by which his master called him, was Hafiz, apparently indicating that he was a Persian by birth. He was, indeed, the only connecting link between Doctor Rutherford and the outer world; and it must be admitted that very little, if anything at all, could be ascertained through him concerning his master's private life, for a more uncommunicative type of servant never existed.

The Doctor had long since ceased to practise his profession openly, though he spent much of his time in compounding strange mixtures out of ingredients, some of which had been for many years in his possession, while others were procured by Hafiz, his dusky retainer, at some chemist's shop in their immediate neighbourhood. A laboratory had been specially fitted up for this purpose in one wing of the house; and the old physician, as he bent over the vessel in which he heated the mysterious decoction, might not inaptly have been compared to an alchemist,



eagerly brooding over his marvellous task of transmuting the baser metals into gold.

But, in truth, the Doctor's experiment was even more daring and far-reaching than any of the feats performed, or supposed to have been performed, by the believers in alchemy; and, incredible as it may seem, his efforts had hitherto been attended with apparent success. The old man had, many years before, conceived the idea of prolonging life indefinitely by judiciously extracting the vital properties of plants and combining them with the essence of the most potent minerals. The notion was not quite original; and modern science, if, indeed, it had ever seriously entertained it, had discarded it as a wild and baseless dream. To Doctor Rutherford's mind, however, the possibility of repelling the approach of death had presented itself as something quite within the scope of the physician's art; and the great age to which he had already attained, seemed to show that his speculations were not entirely chimerical.

One evening, in the month of October, the doctor was engaged in his favourite occupation in the laboratory, while Hafiz respectfully watched his movements in the background. In the midst of the silence, which neither the old man nor his attendant seemed disposed to break, could be distinctly heard the simmering of the peculiarly-shaped antique-looking vessel suspended above the glowing fire.

All at once, the Doctor, lifting up the cover of the vessel, and peering down into its interior, uttered a hoarse cry of alarm.

"Gracious God!" he exclaimed, "what is this? The Elixir has lost its natural colour. It is as red as blood!"

"Nay, master," said Hafiz, pronouncing the words with a distinctly foreign accent, "you must be wrong, I swear. By the prophet, you must be wrong!"

"How dare you contradict me, sirrah?"

burst out the Doctor, with an expression partly of anger and partly of fear on his withered countenance. "I tell you, knave, I see my fate in this mixture to-night."

Hafiz grinned, but speedily stifled any tendency towards mirth, as he scanned his master's face.

"Perhaps there is something forgotten," he said at length.

"No, no," said the Doctor; "I have put in all the ingredients. What can it be? I cannot have made a mistake; and yet—and yet—"

He paused, and stared into the fire with glistening eyes.

"Were it not better, master," Hafiz ventured to suggest, "not to touch a drop of the Elixir to-night?"

"Nay, you white-livered rascal," rejoined the Doctor, with a contemptuous sneer; "I am not afraid of consequences, I have suffered too much during my long life to shrink from what most men call disaster. If I have gained a lengthened lease of life what has it availed me? My years, for nearly two full centuries, have been but a dreary waste." As he uttered the last words, a deep sigh came forth, as it



UP A BROAD STAIRCASE.

were, from the caverns of his aged heart.

The Asiatic, now assuming a more serious look, advanced a few steps, and rather diffidently asked:

"Might I, too, look at it, master, to see if it is all right?"

"Yes, Hafiz, you may look; and then, perhaps, your shallow brain may realize that I am not labouring under any delusion."

The keen vision of Hafiz quickly detected that his master had unconsciously distorted the fact, when he said that the mysterious contents of the vessel were "as red as blood." They had, certainly, an entirely different colour from that which they had always exhibited before, on similar occasions; and the impression conveyed by a close inspection was that the compound was

gradually assuming a crimson hue, which, when it began to cool, might be easily mistaken for blood.

"Now, Hafiz, are you satisfied?" said Doctor Rutherford, as the Asiatic drew back, with an almost imperceptible shudder. "Was I right, or not, in thinking that a strange transformation has taken place in the Elixir?"

Hafiz was now genuinely alarmed.

"Master," he said eagerly, laying his swarthy hand on the Doctor's arm, "drink none of it to-night. Some demon has turned it into blood!"

"Folly! Folly!" said Doctor Rutherford, with a frown. "I have carefully compounded it; and, if any change is to come to-night, it must be part of Nature's inscrutable designs, and cannot be averted by human agency. As for me, I am ready to meet my destiny. By the use of the precious Elixir, I have lived more than two hundred years, and I will not cast it away now, whatever may befall me."

"But—but—oh! dear master," said Hafiz, with trembling lips, "what if you should die?"

"If I should die?" repeated the Doctor, with a ghastly smile. "Ha! ha! ha! and what then, Hafiz? What is death? Release from the bondage of the flesh—the emancipation of the enslaved soul. Is life so dear a thing to me that I should choose to dwell imprisoned in the body for ever? Have I not told you more than once that in the scroll of Fate there is affixed to my name these cabalistic words:

'Through death he shall regain his lost happiness, and even from the grave love shall bloom again?'

Ah! Hafiz, what a thought—to be reunited to one without whom the world is a desert and existence a curse! For this have I lived—for this I would gladly die. Yes, yes, the Elixir has been my friend, my sustainer all these years, and to-night, perhaps, it may bring me that happiness I have vainly yearned for. The goblet, man—the goblet. Hasten, hasten; I can tarry in suspense no longer!"

The Asiatic dared not disobey this peremptory command. He rushed over to a corner of the laboratory, and, snatching up a silver goblet, beautifully chased, silently handed it to his master. Then, at a gesture from the Doctor, he removed the vessel from its position above the fire, and poured into it a goodly portion of the mysterious fluid.

As the old physician raised the goblet to his lips, its contents bubbled up in crimson globules.

The Doctor's dark grey eyes flashed from beneath his shaggy eye-brows with almost the fire of youth.

"The time has come!" he murmured. "Even if I should lose the great gift of extended life, the fruit of long research and occult knowledge, what does it matter if she comes back to me?"

Hafiz looked on amazed and almost terror-stricken at his master, who drained the goblet to the dregs.

Scarcely had the old physician finished the draught, when he suddenly laid his hand upon his heart.

"Oh! wonderful! wonderful! wonderful!" he exclaimed, with a look of exultation; "my youth is returning—the shadows of old age are fading away from me, like night before the dawn!"

The attendant silently took the goblet extended towards him by his master.



"THE GOBLET, MAN—THE GOBLET. HASTEN."

"Pour out a fresh draught," said the Doctor, eagerly. "Let not the precious Elixir be wasted! Drink of it, too, yourself, Hafiz! Drink, drink, poor, wavering fool!"

The Asiatic shook his head with an air of mild protest.

"What, Hafiz," said Doctor Rutherford, with an odd smile, "do you not wish, too, to renew your youth, to be happy, to be loved?"

"No, no, master," said the Asiatic, with a scared look in his dusky face. "I need it not. I am satisfied to remain as I am. The Elixir to-night has such a blood-red colour that it frightens me. I cannot bring myself to drink it, master. I feel that it would kill me!"

"Then live, wretch, and wither!" exclaimed his master, fiercely.

"I envy you not, even though you were to exist in earthly misery for ten thousand years. Better one hour of true happiness than countless centuries of loneliness and gloom!"

The old man's face had by this time become quite radiant with glowing rapture. It seemed as if he were anticipating some great event, which was to be the crowning glory of his life.

"Light me to the Blue Room, Hafiz," he said, waving his hand with unwonted gaiety towards his dark-faced attendant, and bring with you the golden candlesticks which were presented to me by Lord Berkeley, in the year 1670. For to-night at least my spirit shall rejoice, and the shadows of the past shall vanish."

The Asiatic automatically obeyed, leading the way up a broad staircase to a large, wainscoted chamber, whose ceiling and panelling were painted in light blue, so as to present a very curious and somewhat fantastic aspect. Immediately above the massive chimney-piece hung the portrait of a lady in the dress of a bygone day. She looked quite young, and there was an indefinable expression at once wistful, wayward, and winsome in her dreamy, wide-open eyes, and in her chaste, flower-shaped lips, that seemed to tremble on the verge of speech.

The Doctor gazed up for a moment at this portrait, and then, with a low murmur of satisfaction, dropped down upon a kind of couch, whereon he lay for some moments, apparently wrapt in a delicious reverie.

"Perhaps, master," interposed the Asiatic, stealthily approaching him, "you might wish to see some eminent man in the profession? The effects of the Elixir might be dangerous."

He emphasized the last word in the most significant manner, as if he were anxious to arouse in the Doctor's breast a sense of fear which would naturally impel him to seek the necessary antidote at once.

"Hence, hence, prating fool!" said the old physician, "I am happy, and I know I shall be happier still. Go!—leave me to myself. I feel that I could laugh and be glad at this moment, even though the

world were splintered into fragments in the morning!"

Hafiz stole out of the room; but a parting glance at the Doctor convinced him that this unnatural exuberance was only the forerunner of some sudden fatality. Attached as he was to his master, and desirous of saving him, if possible, from the consequences of what he regarded as a rash

and desperate act, he resolved in this emergency to take a decisive step. He flung a kind of cloak across his shoulders, drew a hat over his dark brows, and rushed off precipitately in the direction of Fitzwilliam Square.

He had frequently, in the course of his wanderings through the city, heard Doctor Hugh Melville spoken of as not only a distinguished physician but a perfect master of the science of chemistry. In many cases where persons had been suspected of secret poisoning, Doctor Melville's examination of the dead bodies had settled the question of "yea" or "nay," though some of his brother physicians had failed to determine the exact cause of death. Though not yet quite fifty years of age, he had reached the front rank in his profession, and had gained quite a European reputation. His book on *Vitality* was considered a masterpiece of scientific



"I, HUMPHRY RUTHERFORD."

investigation and profound physiological research. He was, moreover, a man of the most courteous and obliging disposition. He often attended the poorest class of patients in their own dingy homes without any hope of remuneration, manifesting sincere sympathy with them in their distress, and giving them a great deal of his valuable time.

It may, therefore, be seen that Hafiz was wise in seeking the assistance and counsel of this excellent man.

Without delay, Doctor Melville ordered out his own carriage, late as the hour was,

and drove rapidly towards the residence of the eccentric, old recluse, whose very existence he had never heard of before. Such thorough goodness of heart, such spontaneous kindness, we do not frequently find amongst the medical men of our time. Less than half-an-hour had elapsed since Hafiz had left the Blue Room, when the old man, who was lying in a state of semi-consciousness on the couch, whereon he had flung himself, was roused by the sound of an opening door.

He started up, and exclaimed, in a half-stupefied fashion:

"Hafiz, are you there? Is that you, Hafiz?"

"No, sir," replied the new comer; "it is a stranger, who has heard of your sudden indisposition, and has come to prescribe for you, and, let us hope, to restore you to your usual health."

The old man stared somewhat haughtily at Doctor Melville.

"My good friend," he said, in a slightly disdainful tone, "you are, I presume, a physician. So am I; but we differ in this—that you belong to the present age—an age of superficial science, and vain half-knowledge, while I have studied in the old-world school, which professed to solve all the mysteries of man's complex nature. You who, perhaps, regard Paracelsus as a mediæval quack, must know very little about the Elixir of Life."

The younger physician shook his head and smiled.

"I am afraid, my dear sir," he said,

"your Paracelsus was a foolish dreamer. Modern physiology has explained away such folly."

"There you err egregiously," returned Doctor Rutherford, who had now raised himself to a sitting posture on the couch. "Come, now, tell me how long do you think I have lived by the use of a rare decoction?"

"I should say you are a very old man, sir."

"Just two

hundred and forty-five years. That is all."

Doctor Melville raised his eyebrows incredulously.

"I fear there must be a slight mistake somehow," he said, with great suavity.

"Not a bit of it," said the other; "and if you want to know something more of my private history, just cast your eyes at that portrait over the chimney-piece there. That was my wife, and we were married in this city in the year 1670. I was then quite a young man, and had only just entered the medical profession. I may mention that, on the occasion, the Viceroy,



THE DOCTOR GAZED UP AT THIS PORTRAIT.

Lord Berkeley, for whom I had acted as an amanuensis for some months, made me a present of that pair of golden candlesticks on the table there before your eyes."

The face of Doctor Melville at that moment was a study. He seemed like a man endeavouring to dispel some illusion caused by the influence of mesmerism, or by the agency of a powerful opiate.

"There is certainly something very extraordinary in all this," he said, with an air of brooding truth. "How curious it is that the face of the lady, whose portrait hangs there above the fire-place, is marvellously like my daughter's face! But for the difference of dress I would almost have sworn it was my daughter's portrait."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the old man. "What a singular coincidence, truly! And pray, doctor—doctor—what's your name?—for I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance—might I trouble you to let me know your daughter's name, and also her age?"

"Her name is Una, and she is just nineteen years of age."

With an exclamation of astonishment Doctor Rutherford raised himself to his feet.

"In God's name, sir," he said, now speaking with terrible earnestness, "if you wish to save me from everlasting misery, gratify an old man's wish—call it a whim if you like—let me see your daughter! bring her here; it can do her no harm. I want to see her. You tell me she resembles that portrait, and that her name is Una? Strange—strange! Can this be some phantasy of nature—for sometimes nature plays



UNA TALBOT.

us curious tricks—or can it be possible that somewhere on this earth my Una still lives, not old, withered as I am, but blooming in changeless youth and loveliness? Listen, and in a few words I will tell you how it happened. I

was young and ambitious. My profession at first seemed to be all in all to me; but there is something stronger than ambition, and that is love—the master passion of our being. And so it was, that just two hundred and twenty-one years ago I fell in love, with the sweetest, purest, fairest creature that ever visited this sad world in the shape of woman. Her maiden name was Una Talbot. Her family was a Roman Catholic one, and they objected to me as a suitor, first, because I happened to be a member of the Reformed Church, and, secondly, because I was associated with Lord Berkeley, to whom the Talbots were bitterly opposed on political grounds. I was an ardent lover, however, and in a moment of weakness—or, should I not rather say, yielding to her supreme trust in me—Una consented to wed me secretly, without obtaining her parent's sanction."

"Una Talbot," murmured Doctor Melville, as if uttering his thoughts aloud, "there is something peculiar in the recurrence of that name." Then staring confusedly at the old man he went on: "you say that your wife's name was Una Talbot, and that she lived in Dublin over two hundred years ago. Why, that was the very name of an ancestress of mine on my



THE OLD MAN STARED AT DR. MELVILLE.

mother's side, and it was after her my daughter was called."

"I knew it must be so!" said the old man, with glittering eyes. "The same! the very same! But let me finish. There was something mysterious about Una's early life. She was just blossoming into womanhood—nineteen at most—and her parents had been always fearful about her health, for she seemed more like an embodied spirit, than a thing of flesh and blood. She was fair-haired, blue-eyed, and was like the Madonna before the angel told her she was to be the Mother of God. I shrank in my secret soul from the idea of marriage with so ethereal a being: but love is stronger than reason—stronger than the strongest presentiments. Well, we were married. Ah! how vividly I can recall that day! It seems as if it were only yesterday. Oh! what unutterable rapture it was to hear her pronounce the marriage formula: 'I take thee for my wedded husband,' to lead her to my home, to whisper in her ears those words of burning love, which were the last I ever addressed to her! Some curious fancy led her to suggest that we should pass the first few days after our marriage in this house. It was not my residence at the time, but it had been the property of a young nobleman, who, having squandered his patrimony, sold it to me at a very low figure a few weeks before my marriage. I gladly acted on Una's suggestion, for here was a capital means of baffling the inquiries of her incensed relatives. They would seek me at my former address, and would find no tidings of me there, as I kept my new residence a complete secret from all my acquaintances. Therefore, they could find no trace of either myself or Una. But alas! a worse misfortune than any I had sought to escape from fell upon me, even on my wedding-day! She had not been many hours my bride, when she disappeared like a phantom, and left me lonely and wretched to wear out life, without love, without hope!"



"I WAS AN ARDENT LOVER."

"I do not quite understand you," Doctor Melville here broke in.

"It was simple enough," said the old man, mournfully shaking his head, "and yet so extraordinary was it that no logic could explain it, no science account for it. On the evening of our wedding-day we were seated side by side. I was telling her, for perhaps the thousandth time, how much she was to me—more than ambition, friends, fame, life itself. In the ecstasy of that sweet moment, I did not pause to notice that she scarcely responded to my impassioned words. I clasped her in my arms. I touched her dear lips with mine;

but lo! in that very instant she seemed to melt away like a vision. She dissolved, as it were, into thin air; and since then I have seen her only in dreams. I have tried to clasp her in my arms as she flitted through the lonely spaces of the night; but I awoke with the bitter consciousness that it was an illusion."

"And so, perhaps, was your marriage," said Doctor Melville, half cynically, as the old man stopped, gasping for breath, and looking more wan and ghostly than ever.

In his own mind, the younger physician asked himself: "Is this a case of senile dementia? or what is it, in Heaven's name?"

"My marriage an illusion?" exclaimed Doctor Ruthford. "My friend, you are too practical, to use the wretched phrase of the nineteenth century. The world, indeed, is perishing from the effect of this sordid materialism. No, no. It was no illusion. We were united at God's altar. Our creeds were different, but we both were true believers in the Redeemer of man, and it mattered not that the clergyman was one of my church and not of hers. But do not mock at me, my good sir; I am old and foolish, perhaps, but bear with my weaknesses, and grant the request I asked of you, to let me see your daughter. Ah! sir, you are leavened, I fear, with the scepticism of a cold-blooded age. You do not



"O UNA! O MY WIFE, FOUND AT LAST."

believe in the transmigration of souls. What, indeed, is there that people *do* believe in now-a-days but money? As for me, mere possessions appear to me so much dross. To show you how little I cling to the things of this world, give me one sheet of note paper, and reach me a pen, which you will find on yonder table."

Doctor Melville followed the old man's directions, but had some difficulty in getting at a writing desk, which he placed on the couch by Doctor Rutherford's side.

"Call in Hafiz, or wait, I will call myself. Hafiz! Hafiz!" and his voice rose to a feeble effort at shouting.

The Asiatic speedily made his appearance.

"I need you as a witness," said his master grimly. "As I have otherwise made provision for you, I am not going to leave you any legacy. Preserve the secret of the Elixir when I am gone, and use it to prolong your own existence."

Hafiz bowed.

Then fixing a keen glance on Doctor Melville, he said:

"Long as we have been talking together you have not told me your surname; let me know it, pray."

Doctor Melville gave the information required.

Then, for some minutes, all that could be heard in the room was the scratching of a pen.

At length, with a sigh, the old physician laid down the pen, and read aloud the following words:

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Humphry Rutherford, of the city of Dublin, Doctor of Medicine, being of sound mind, memory, and understanding, make this as my last will and testament. I leave all I die possessed of to Una, daughter of Doctor Melville, of the city of Dublin, and I appoint her my residuary legatee and sole executrix of this my will."

"And now there is nothing to be done save to attest

the will," said Doctor Rutherford.

"But, my dear sir—" began Doctor Melville.

"Do not gainsay," said the old man, with a supplicating look: and forthwith he signed his name at the foot of the document, whose contents he had just read out.

The signatures of Doctor Melville and Hafiz, were speedily attached.

"So much for settling my affairs," said the old physician with forced calmness. "And now let me see her face—the face of Una—before I die."

"Well, Doctor Rutherford, I should be a brute to refuse, under the circumstances," said the younger physician. Have patience for half-an-hour, and I promise you that you shall see my daughter. Meanwhile, your servant here must remain with you in case you want anything."

"Yes, yes," said the old man, nodding self-complacently. "Hafiz will stay here until your return. Go! Gratify the wish, the last hope of an unhappy being; and may God Almighty bless you for it!"

Without saying anything in reply, Doctor Melville hurried away.

The old man awaited his return with breathless impatience. Every moment he was becoming more restless, more vehement, more frenzied.

"Yes, yes, yes," he muttered, with his eyes fixed on vacancy; "she will come back! I know she will come back to me; and I shall realize what true happiness means before I die!"

Hafiz vainly tried to calm his overstrung excitement. He kept saying repeatedly, "She is coming back! she is coming back," and listening eagerly for the sound of approaching footsteps.

At length, there was a knock at the hall door; and the old physician, unable to control his emotions, rose, and endeavoured to follow Hafiz out of the Blue Room. He was, however, too feeble to make his way farther than the door of the apartment. There he paused, with a wild stare in his eyes, and his hands stretched forth tremblingly.

"Oh! hasten, hasten," he exclaimed, in a broken voice; "hasten, or I die!"

Presently Hafiz, holding in his right hand one of the golden candlesticks, showed a young girl of a strange and almost

unearthly type of beauty up the old-fashioned staircase. There was a dreamy smile on her face; but her lips trembled slightly as she gazed upon the withered countenance of the poor old physician. Still, she did not pause, but advanced towards him quietly until they stood quite close to each other.

"O Una! O my wife!—my long-lost Una, found at last!" almost shrieked the old man. And he spasmodically strove to fling his arms around her neck.

She shrank away from him with a cry of alarm, and would have fallen, had not Hafiz rushed to her assistance.

As for Doctor Rutherford, his withered features now grew frightfully pallid. A low, heart-piercing moan escaped him, and then from his blanched lips trickled a stream of blood. He made a faint effort to speak, but could only articulate one word:

"WIFE!"

The next moment, his jaws relaxed, and he fell back—dead.



AN OPERA TOUR with ADELINA PATTI

MANAGED BY
LIONEL S. MAPLESON



THE Italian Opera Company with which I was associated in 1889 and 1890 was the largest operatic enterprise ever attempted. It was organized by Messrs. Henry Abbey, and Maurice Grau, the well-known American mana-

gers; and they had engaged Madame Adelina Patti, Madame Albani, Madame Nordica, Madame Valda, Mlle. Pettigiani, Mlle. Fabbri, Mlle. Synnerberg, Mlle. Claire, Signori Del Puente, Perugini, Ravelli, Vicini, Vanni, Bioletto, Marescalchi, Zardo, Carbone, Marcassa, Novara, Castelmarty, Migliara, de Vaschetti, Lucini, Sapio, Arditi, Mlle. Bauermeister, Signor Tamagno, and many other famous *artistes*, besides an orchestra of sixty, a military band of thirty, a chorus of eighty, and twenty-four danseuses. To give some idea of the enormous expenses of such a company, I may mention that Madame Patti received £34,000 for thirty performances; and Tamagno, the great Italian tenor, received £400 a night.

We went first to Chicago, specially for the inauguration of the Auditorium, which had been erected at a cost of three million dollars. Our season there, which lasted four weeks, was very successful, and the receipts amounted to \$233,300. The following operas were performed: *Romeo, Faust, William Tell, Barbière di Siviglia,*

Traviata, Trovatore, Aida, Gli Ugonotti, Marta, and Sonnambula. A special feature was the production of Verdi's *Otello*, with Tamagno in the title rôle. Madame Albani made a most brilliant success in the part of Desdemona; and, in every city we subsequently visited, her superb impersonation of this character, quite took the audience by storm.

On the 4th of January, 1890, we packed up at Chicago; and, after giving a morning performance, made our way to the railway *dépôt*, where a special train was awaiting us. As the cars would be our home for the following six days, the train was provided with every comfort, and was made up in the following manner: Next the engine was



LIONEL S. MAPLESON.

placed one of the three baggage cars, which contained scenery, dresses, properties, &c., in addition to the private luggage of the members of the company. Then came Madame Patti's car, which needs a special description. This car was built expressly for Madame Patti, and is at her service whenever she is travelling in the States. It is over 60 feet in length, and furnished throughout in the most superb manner. In the centre of the car, the drawing room is situated, having large plate-glass windows, reaching nearly the entire length of the saloon, and giving an uninterrupted view of the interior. There are sleeping apartments for Madame Patti, and also for her party. Madame Patti's husband, Signor Nicolini, accompanied her throughout the tour, and her suite included a

secretary, courier, a maid, and a lady, whose special duty it was to superintend the packing, &c., of the vast number of costumes that comprised the operatic and private wardrobe of La Diva. In addition to the above, there was a staff of servants, comprising porters, cooks, &c., attached to the car, and reserved solely for the service of Madame Patti. The car contains a piano, in the drawing room, and a

bath-room is also provided. In the rear of the car is situated the extensive kitchen, in which all Madame Patti's meals are prepared. The car is christened the "Adelina Patti," and her name appears on the sides of the car, as well as on the outfit belonging to it. The wheels of this car are constructed of compressed paper, as these wheels have been found to possess enduring powers far superior to those of iron, which frequently

crack. Next to the "Adelina Patti" was placed the hotel car, "International."

I was fortunate enough to secure a berth in the hotel car, and to have as companion Signor Perugini, a gentleman most popular with the *artistes*, and especially with the fair portion. At the rear of our car the kitchen was situated.

Next in order came "The Maryland" and "Mann Boudoir Car," in

proximity to which were two more sleeping cars of the first class, after which were three sleeping cars of the second class, to accommodate members of the chorus and ballet, and two baggage waggons brought up the rear, making twelve cars in all.

My berth was situated next to the state-room and apartments reserved for the use of Madame Albani and her suite, and on several occasions after dinner



MADAME ADELINA PATTI.



MADAME ALBANI.

Madame Albani honoured me by paying me a visit.

The ground was covered with snow when we left Chicago on Saturday night. On Sunday morning we arrived at St. Louis, where the weather was very fine and warm.

Most of the *artistes* and myself had arranged with the Pullman Car Company to supply us with meals at a general rate of \$1 each meal; but Signor Tamagno had preferred to lay in a stock of provisions of his own choice, and his meals were prepared for him by his brother, assisted by two of the members of the Italian chorus.

Wherever we stopped, crowds of curious sight-seers gathered round the windows of Madame Patti's car, eager to catch a glimpse of the world-renowned singer, and when Madame Patti appeared at the window, and kissed her hand to the surging crowd, their enthusiasm knew no bounds, and hearty cheers were given over and over again.

Tamagno whiled away the time by playing cards with three of the chorus, and it was strange to observe that an *artiste* of such great celebrity, and in receipt of such an enormous salary, was not in the least proud or reserved in his manner. We travelled through the State of Arkansas, which is about the size of England. Then, after passing through Texas, we crossed the Mexican frontier near Eagle Pass; and, almost immediately a wonderful change was to be observed.

The first station was crowded with all sorts and conditions of Mexican life: from

the men of position, who were clothed in splendidly embroidered suits, and wore large sombreros, ornamented heavily with gold and silver lace; down to the half-naked, poverty-stricken Indians, who abound in every Mexican town. Even the better dressed Indians have a general appearance of having out-grown their clothes; the sleeves of the cotton shirt only reach to their elbows, and the pants of the same material end at the knees. In addition to this unpretentious costume, the Indian wears a pair of sandals fastened on with leather straps, and a palm-leaf hat protects his head from the scorching rays of the sun. A blanket completes his attire; and, whatever the temperature may be, the latter article is never cast aside. A pretty correct idea of the social position of a Mexican can be formed by studying his sombrero—some of the best of these hats cost several hundred dollars.

Madame Nordica, taking a fancy to some silver snakes in the sombrero of a Mexican youth, asked if he would sell them, and he did not hesitate to accept the offer. Tamagne, being of a more practical nature, invested in a basket of eggs that an Indian woman had for sale. The day we arrived being a national holiday, the entire population of the town had congregated at the station and in its vicinity, to catch a glimpse of the company that was about to make a visit to their capital, and a most



MLLE. BAUMEISTER.

picturesque scene the station presented, filled as it was by such a motley crew.

We amused ourselves by throwing handfuls of small coin of the country to be scrambled for by the ragged little urchins that besieged our train, and the elder inhabitants did not disdain to join in the scrimmage. The Mexican custom house officers have the appearance of monks, as they wear long coarse coats with the tall, conical hoods pulled over their caps.

We left at about 7 p.m., and, after an hour's journey, the Mexican mountains began to appear in the distance, and afforded a pleasant change to the eye, which had begun to weary of the apparently endless prairie land, through which we had been travelling for so many hours.

The vegetation was entirely composed of plants of the cactus species, which thrive luxuriously, notwithstanding the lifeless nature of the soil, which is composed of stones and sand. The time of our visit being in the dry season of Mexico, which lasts for over eight months, we passed many water courses entirely dried up, and the whole land presented a most inhospitable appearance. The rainy season commences in June and finishes by September; during the rest of the year the sun shines brilliantly, and one need never carry an umbrella "in case it should rain." At 9.30 we arrived quite close to the strange, black mountains, which are quite devoid of any vegetation, and appear most weird.

The clouds of dust became most trying. Those of the party who were sitting on the platforms had even their ears and hair filled with it. Del Puente had provided himself with a pair of goggles, and I much envied him, the wire gauze protecting the eyes from the penetrating dust. We saw some sandspouts, which formed a pretty picture, as they gracefully travelled over the ground. They run to a height of many

hundred feet. Owing to the continued polishing action of the sand clouds that pass over the plains, the telegraph wires have the appearance of being of burnished silver. At 10.45 we arrived at a most quaint little town, where we saw extraordinary wooden carts drawn by teams of no less than fourteen mules; and Mr. Gye, who possessed a Kodak, took several interesting views.

No one was sorry when we reached Torreon, a junction whence the line branches off to either Mexico city or to El Paso. Within a few feet of the station there was a native village, the huts being built of

canes with straw plaited in between to keep off the rays of the sun. We made a visit to the interesting settlement, which reminded us strongly of some African scene. Hungry dogs prowled about, endeavouring to find some food. We entered a hut and saw an Indian woman seated on the ground, busily engaged in the manufacture of the national tortilla or maize cake. Placed beside her were two flat stones, between which she crushed a handful of Indian corn, then, moistening the flour obtained, she kneaded the dough with her hands, until of a sufficient consistency, then rolled it on

a flat slab, placed in front of her, both slab and roller being of stone. The thin cake was then cooked in an earthen dish over a fire composed of a few sticks and a handful of dry sage bush. After having seen the delicacy prepared, we politely but firmly declined the woman's invitation to partake thereof. Looking into another hut we saw a poor little Indian baby sitting patiently on the sand which formed the floor of the dwelling, and the face of the poor little creature was quite covered with flies, but it did not make any complaint.

Along the route we passed many native villages, the huts built of canes, and presenting a very Robinson Crusoe like appearance.



SIGNOR TAMAGNO.

The ordinary price for a stall at the "Nacional" is only \$1.50, and the admission to the gallery 25 cents. But notwithstanding the high prices charged, this season at Mexico City was most successful. Every family of any position felt it incumbent upon them to be seen at the opera. I heard that, when we left the city, the national pawnbroking establishment was quite filled with articles pledged by proud but impecunious families. This establishment is one of the most remarkable institutions in Mexico, and is much visited by tourists. It was originally built as a private residence for Cortes, shortly after the Conquest. It still retains a great deal of its ancient style, and there is much to admire in its quaint, old doors, windows, staircases, ceilings, &c. It was founded by Don Pedro Terreros, who, in 1744, endowed the institution with \$300,000 out of his private fortune. His object was to relieve the poor, and those whom circumstances might compel to have recourse to raising money. I consider that this philanthropic count indirectly patronised Italian opera, as, without the assistance of his admirable institution, many a music-loving Mexican would have had to deny himself the pleasure of hearing Madame Patti, the cost of seats being so high.

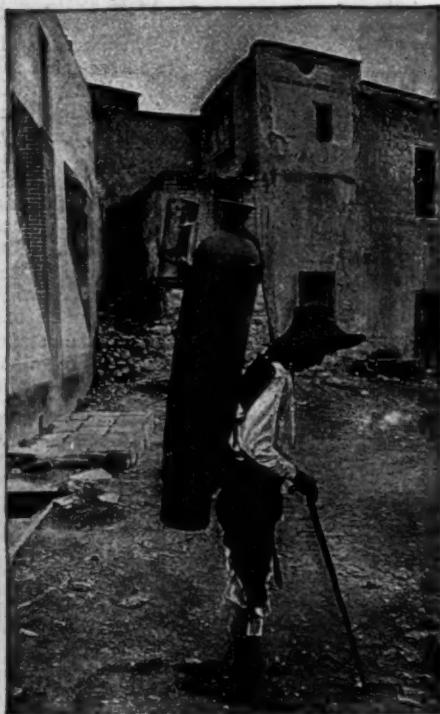
If the front of the house was uncomfortable, words altogether fail to describe the condition of the stage and the dressing rooms for the *artistes*. The stage carpenters and scene shifters were all natives; and, as they only speak the Spanish language, we had great difficulty in making them understand our orders. Behind the curtain gas was conspicuous by its absence, and each *artiste* was provided with two candles on entering the theatre at night. The dressing-rooms were on a level with the stage, on either side, and presented the appearance of dungeons in some ancient castle. None of the rooms had windows, and the doors were the only source of ventilation. I was surprised to observe that the local members of the orchestra lighted their cigarettes before commencing rehearsal, but soon I became used to the sight, as everyone about the theatre smokes, even the stage carpenters. The public come and sit in the stalls, to hear the rehearsals, and smoke likewise. The scenery was in a fearful condition, and afforded a most striking contrast to that which we brought with us for the operas, *Aida*, *Semiramide* and *Otello*. The prompt box was placed in the centre of the stage, but owing to there being no floor below the stage, our prompter—who



A HILL-SIDE VILLAGE ON THE WAY TO THE CAPITAL.

was very inclined to embonpoint—had to raise a trap door in the stage and to crawl along on hands and knees, a passage so narrow that each night he dreaded becoming fixed, and unable to advance or retreat. We commenced the season by playing *Semiramide* with Madame Patti, and the house was crammed with a fashionable audience.

The ladies of the audience were dressed in costumes, light in colour, pink, white, &c., trimmed with flowers and handsome laces. Very fine combs and pins adorned



A MEXICAN WATER CARRIER.

the hair. Between the acts a curtain is lowered, which presents a most novel appearance, being entirely covered with brightly coloured advertisements. The manager lets out the curtain by the yard, and the result is hardly likely to please an artistic eye. The advertisements, being attached with pins, flap about as the curtain is raised or lowered. The men amuse themselves in the interval by smoking cigarettes, and by directing a searching gaze through their opera glasses on the fair occupants of the "Palcos." A Mexican

audience is very apathetic, and everything is accepted and witnessed with an air of boredom, and the high prices paid for their seats did not seem to make

the audience less frigid. The house was, nevertheless, always crammed during our stay. Every night, before the opera began, the fire engine arrived, and the men took up their station at the rear of the stage. Soldiers stood in the wings, the long barrelled six-shooters stuck prominently in their belts.

Sunday in Mexico is observed in a peculiar manner, not at all likely to please an English visitor. This is the busiest day in the markets. Hawkers fill the streets, disposing of their wares; the Indians, from the neighbouring gardens on "La Viga" canal, come into the city with their stocks of vegetables and fruit. In the alameda or park, military bands play all the morning, and the poor, who are passionately fond of music, throng the walks. The chimes, which ring out from every steeple at short intervals, have a very characteristic sound, and a Sunday in Mexico is never to be forgotten. The streets are crowded with men and women selling ice-cream, pulque (the national drink) and baskets of cake and confectionery. The theatres are open on Sunday, and give two representations. During our stay we always performed two operas on the day that should have been the day of rest.

Bull fights are given on Sunday.



AN INDIAN WITH DONKEYS.



also; and once I was persuaded to witness one of these inhuman spectacles. The amphitheatre, which is built of wood, resembles a large circus. As there is no roof, one half is bathed in sunlight, and admission to this half, which is known as "Sol," is only 25 cents, whilst the shady side is called "Lombra," and the price of admission is \$2. There is a judge, appointed by the municipality, whose word is law; and a bugler stands behind him in his box, and conveys the judge's orders to the fighters below.

The moment having arrived for the grand entry, the procession of fighters made its appearance. First came the matador, whose duty it is to plunge a thin bladed sword up to the hilt in the heart of the bull, as it charges him. After him followed the capeadores, who madden the bull, and urge him to charge; the picadores, mounted on sorry steeds, and armed with long lances; and the lazadores, who lasso and remove bulls that prove too tame.

At last the bull dashed madly into the ring. I clenched my hands and stood horror-struck, as I saw the fierce animal—after looking about it wildly at the crowded circus—charge the horses, the picadores vainly endeavouring to drive the infuriated beast off with repeated thrusts of their sharp lances. The poor horses were very badly gored, and I will draw a veil over that portion of the barbaric exhibition. At the next bugle call the moment had arrived for the banderillas to commence their terribly risky performance. One of the men took up his position, in the centre of the ring, armed with two banderillas, which are about a foot in length.

They have barbed points and the stems are decorated with streaming ribbons of the national colours. It was a most exciting moment. I could almost hear my heart beating, as the bull, worked up to a pitch of madness by the waving of the crimson cloaks, charged full tilt at the spot occupied by the banderilla. It seemed there could be no escape for the man, when, just as the bull's horns were on the point of impaling him, he leaned forward and planted the two darts in the neck of the animal and skipped lightly aside, whilst the bull thundered past, only to find that his victim had escaped. As the poor creature tossed his head with pain and anger, the long barbed banderillas swayed about and lacerated the flesh still more, whilst the blood flowed in crimson streams down its sides, and was absorbed in the sand with which the floor of the ring was covered. Another bugle call announced that the moment for the matador to kill the bull had arrived. El Capitan carried a vermillion cloak of a different hue to those of the "Capas" and with this he worried the bull and



AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.

excited it to charge him. The laws prohibit a fighter to strike the bull until it has charged him three times. The object of the matador is to plunge the sword into the neck of the animal, between the shoulders, and to pierce the heart. If this is successfully done the poor tortured beast staggers, projects its tongue, looks round vainly for a means of escape, and then, its knees giving way, it sinks to the ground and dies. If the sword thrust is not skilfully made, the animal wanders about with the hilt of the sword projecting from

its neck, and I had the misfortune to witness this, later in the afternoon. The butcher then appears and after the sorely wounded animal sinks to the earth, gives it a finishing stroke. After the death of the bull, the mules and drag are brought in and the hind legs of the dead animal being attached to the drag, the mules are urged to a sharp trot, and the body taken from the ring, making a deep furrow in the sand as it passes. Should the matador have made a successful stroke, and distinguished himself in the eyes of the audience, the people stand up and shout to him expressions of their admiration, and throw flowers, money, cigars, fruit and other favours. Men fling their \$100 sombreros into the ring, and consider it a great honour when El Capitan picks them up and throws them back. The banderillas that are torn from the flesh of the dead animals command a ready sale, and can be bought at the entrance after the fight.

Like Chicago, Mexico was quite *en fête*

during our opera season. Military bands were stationed every night in the colonnade of the opera house, and played until the time for the opera to commence. Crowds of people, who were too poor to pay the price of admission, consoled themselves by standing round the entrance gates and watching the

arrival of their more fortunate fellow citizens. Any body that could, by any possible means, claim any relationship to anyone connected with the local management of the theatre, used to squeeze themselves somewhere behind the scenes, so as to be as near to Madame Patti as possible, and

these intruders became so numerous that the armed police had their time fully occupied in preventing them from edging their way on to the stage in view of the audience. The flies, or bridges above the stage, were crowded by people, who, although they could see nothing, were, at least, able to hear the operas, after a fashion. The "dressers" intended for the use of the *artistes* were all Indian women of the most uninviting appearance, and these poor creatures



THE BANDERILLA'S DANGEROUS PART.



THE MOMENT FOR THE MATADOR TO KILL THE BULL HAD ARRIVED



AN OX TEAM IN THE CITY OF MEXICO.

habitually squatted about on the floor outside the dressing rooms, as the *artistes* preferred the inconvenience of dressing themselves to having such very unpleasant creatures to attend to them. The system of throwing bouquets on the stage is gradually becoming obsolete in cities in the States, as well as in England; and, indeed, many of the greatest *artistes* have expressed a wish that the practice should be stopped. But, in Mexico, the bouquet throwing is still indulged in largely. The front of the stage, after the opera, frequently had the appearance of a flower market; and when Madame Patti gave her services gratuitously, for the benefit of Mexican charities, the stage, after this performance, was quite ankle deep in violets, which perfumed the air in the most delicious manner. We produced *L'Africaine* during the season; but no men could be obtained in the city to represent the Indian warriors in the procession scene, the ordinary native supers not being sufficiently intelligent to undertake the task, as the members of this male ballet are required

to go through a mimic combat, and also dance. The difficulty was finally overcome by enlisting the services of the assistant stage manager, the scenic artist, the members of the property department, and other members of the staff, as well as the couriers of Madame Patti and Madame Albani.

Having finished our engagement in Mexico, we took to the cars again, and travelled to San Francisco, where we again scored a success. Thence we journeyed to Denver, Omaha, through Canada to Boston, and finally to New York, where we finished our opera season on Friday night, April 25th, on which occasion Madame Patti appeared in *La Traviata*. The house was crammed from floor to gallery, and the audience remained, after the performance, insisting on hearing "Home, sweet Home," once again. Before leaving the theatre, Madame Patti presented many members of the company with handsome

diamond rings and other articles of jewellery, as souvenirs of the successful tour.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE CITY OF LEON.



It was Alick Robbins who named the invalid the Living Skeleton, and probably remorse for having thus given him a title so descriptively accurate, caused him to make friends with the Living Skeleton, a man who seemed to have no friends.

Robbins never forgot their first conversation. It happened in this way. It was the habit of the Living Skeleton to leave his hotel every morning promptly at ten o'clock, if the sun was shining, and to shuffle rather than to walk down the gravel street to the avenue of palms. There, picking out a seat on which the sun shone, the Living Skeleton would sit down and seem to wait patiently for some one who never came. He wore a shawl around his neck and a soft cloth cap on his skull. Every bone in his face stood out against the skin, for there seemed to be no flesh, and his clothes hung as loosely on him as they would have upon a skeleton. It required no second glance at the Living Skeleton to know that the remainder of his life was numbered by days or hours, and not by weeks or months. He didn't seem to have energy enough even to read, and so it was

that Robbins sat down one day on the bench beside him, and said sympathetically:

"I hope you are feeling better to-day."

The Skeleton turned towards him and laughed a low, noiseless and mirthless laugh for a moment, and then said, in a hollow, far-away voice, a voice that had no lungs behind it: "I am through with feeling either better or worse."

"Oh, I hope it is not as bad as that," said Robbins; "the climate is doing you good down here, is it not?"

Again the Skeleton laughed silently, and Robbins began to feel uneasy. The Skeleton's eyes were large and bright, and they fastened themselves upon Robbins in a way that increased that gentleman's uneasiness, and made him think that perhaps the Skeleton knew he had so named him.

"I have no more interest in climate," said the Skeleton. "I merely seem to live because I have been in the habit of living for some years; I presume that is it, because my lungs are entirely gone. Why I can talk or why I can breathe is a mystery to me. You are perfectly certain you hear me?"

"Oh, I hear you quite distinctly," said Robbins.

"Well, if it wasn't that people tell me that they can hear me, I wouldn't believe that I am really speaking, because, you see, I have nothing to speak with. Isn't it Shakespeare who says something about when the brains are out the man is dead? Well, I have seen some men who make me

think Shakespeare was wrong in his diagnosis, but it is generally supposed that when the lungs are gone a man is dead. To tell the truth I *am* dead, practically. You know the old American story about the man who walked around to save funeral expenses; well, it isn't quite that way with me, but I can appreciate how the man felt. Still, I take a keen interest in life, although you might not think so. You see, I haven't much time left; I am going to die at eight o'clock on the 30th of April. Eight o'clock at night, not in the morning, just after table d'hôte is done with."

"You're going to *what*!" cried Robbins in astonishment.

"I'm going to die that day. You see, I have got things to such a fine point, that I can die any time I want to. I could die right here, now, if I wished. If you have any mortal interest in the matter I'll do it, and show you that what I say is true. I don't mind much, you know, although I had fixed April the 30th as the limit. It wouldn't matter a bit for me to go off now, if it would be of any interest to you."

"I beg you," said Robbins, very much alarmed, "not to try any experiments on my account. I am quite willing to believe anything you say about the matter—of course you ought to know."

"Yes, I do know," answered the Living Skeleton sadly. "Of course, I have had my struggle with hope and fear, but that is

all past now, as you may well understand. The reason that I have fixed the date for the 30th April is this: you see I have only a certain amount of money—I do not know why I should make any secret of it. I have exactly 240 francs to-day, over and above another 100 francs which I have set aside for another purpose. I am paying 8 francs a day at the 'Golden Dragon,' that you see will keep me just thirty days, and then I intend to die."

The Skeleton laughed again, without sound, and Robbins moved uneasily on the seat.

"I don't see," he said finally, "what there is to laugh about in that condition of affairs."

"Don't you?" said the Skeleton. "Well, I don't suppose there is very much; but there is something else that I consider very laughable, and that I will tell you if you will keep it a secret. You see, the old Golden Dragon himself—I always call our innkeeper the Golden Dragon, just as you call me the Living Skeleton."

"Oh, I beg your pardon," said Robbins, stammering. "I—"

"Oh, it doesn't matter at all. You are perfectly right, and I think that a very apt term. Well, the old Golden Dragon makes a great deal of his money by robbing the dead. You didn't know that, did you? You thought it was the living who supported him, and goodness knows he robs *them* when he has a chance. Well, you are very much mistaken. When a man dies in the 'Golden Dragon,' he, or his friends rather, have to pay very sweetly for it. The Dragon charges them for re-furnishing the room. Every stick of furniture is charged for, all the wall paper, and so on. I suppose it is perfectly right to charge something, but the Dragon is not content with what is right. He knows he has finally lost a customer, and so he makes all he can out of him. The furniture so paid for is not



"I AM GOING TO DIE AT EIGHT O'CLOCK ON THE 30TH APRIL."

re-placed, and the walls are not papered again, but the Dragon doesn't abate a penny of his bill on that account. Now, I have enquired of the furnishing man, on the street back of the hotel, and he has written on his card just the cost of mattress, sheets, pillows, and all that sort of thing, and the amount comes up to about 50 francs. I have put in an envelope a 50-franc note, and with it the card of the furniture man. I have written also in the latter, telling the old Dragon just what the things will cost that he needs, and have referred him to the card of the furniture man who has given me the figures.

This envelope I have addressed to the Dragon, and he will find it when I am dead. This is the joke that old man Death and myself have put up on the Dragon, and my only regret is that I shall not be able to enjoy a look at the Dragon's countenance as he reads my last letter to him. Another sum of money I have put away, in good hands where he won't have a chance to get it, for my funeral expenses, and then you see I am through with the world. I have nobody to leave that I need worry about, or who would either take care of me or feel sorry for me if I needed care or sympathy, which I do not. So that is why I laugh, and that is why I come down and sit on this bench, in the sunshine, and enjoy the posthumous joke."

Robbins did not appear to be able to see the humour of the situation quite as strongly as the Living Skeleton did. At different times after that when they met, he had offered the Skeleton more money if he wanted it, so that he might prolong his life a little, but the Skeleton always refused.

A sort of friendship sprung up between Robbins and the Living Skeleton, at least, as much of a friendship as can exist between the living and the dead, for Robbins was a muscular young fellow who did not need to

live at the Riviera on account of his health, but merely because he detested an English winter. Besides this, it may be added, although it really is nobody's business, that a Nice Girl and her parents lived in this particular part of the South of France.

One day Robbins took a little excursion in a carriage to Toulon. He had invited the Nice Girl to go with him, but on that particular day she could not go. There was some big charity function on hand, and one necessary part of the affair was

the wheedling of money out of people's pockets, and the Nice Girl had undertaken to do part of the wheedling. She was very good at it, and she rather prided herself upon it, but then she was a very nice girl, pretty as well, and so people found it very difficult to refuse her. On the evening of the day there was to be a ball at the principal hotel in the place, also in connection with this very desirable charity. Robbins had reluctantly gone to Toulon alone, but you may depend upon it he was back in time for the ball.

"Well," he said to the Nice Girl when he met her, "what luck collecting, to-day?"

"Oh, the greatest luck," she replied enthusiastically, "and who do you think I got the most money from?"

"I am sure I haven't the slightest idea—that

old English duke, he certainly has money enough."

"No, not from him at all; the very last person you would expect it from—your friend, the Living Skeleton."

"What!" cried Robbins, in alarm.

"Oh, I found him on the bench where he usually sits, in the avenue of palms. I told him all about the charity and how useful it was, and how necessary, and how we all ought to give as much as we could towards it, and he smiled and smiled at me in that curious way of his. 'Yes,' he said in a whisper, 'I believe the charity should



A NICE GIRL.



"COUNT THAT OVER CAREFULLY."

be supported by everyone; I will give you eighty francs.' Now, wasn't that very generous of him? Eighty francs, that was ten times what the Duke gave, and as he handed me the money he looked up at me and said in that awful whisper of his: 'Count that over carefully when you get home and see if you can find out what else I have given you. There is more than eighty francs there.' Then, after I got home, I——"

But here the Nice Girl paused, when she looked at the face of Robbins, to whom she was talking. That face was ghastly pale and his eyes were staring at her but not seeing her. "Eighty francs," he was whispering to himself, and he seemed to be making a mental calculation in subtraction. Then noticing the Nice Girl's amazed look at him, he said:

"Did you take the money?"

"Of course I took it," she said, "Why shouldn't I?"

"Great Heavens!" gasped Robbins, and without a word he turned and fled, leaving the Nice Girl transfixed with astonishment and staring after him with a frown on her pretty brow.

"What does he mean by such conduct?" she asked herself. But Robbins disappeared

from the gathering throng in the large room of the hotel, dashed down the steps, and hurried along the narrow pavement towards the "Golden Dragon." The proprietor was standing in the hallway with his hands behind him, a usual attitude with the Dragon.

"Where," gasped Robbins, "is Mr.—Mr.—" and then he remembered he didn't know the name. "Where is the Living Skeleton?"

"He has gone to his room," answered the Dragon, "he went early to-night, he wasn't feeling well, I think."

"What is the number of his room?"

"No. 40," and the proprietor rang a loud, jangling bell, whereupon one of the chambermaids appeared. "Show this gentleman to No. 40."

The girl preceded Robbins up the stairs. Once she looked over her shoulder, and said in a whisper, "Is he worse?"

"I don't know," answered Robbins, "that's what I have come to see."

At No. 40 the girl paused, and rapped



THE NICE GIRL TRANSFIXED WITH ASTONISHMENT.

lightly on the door panel. There was no response. She rapped again, this time louder. There was still no response.

"Try the door," said Robbins.

"I am afraid to," said the girl.

"Why?"

"Because he said if he were asleep the door would be locked, and if he were dead the door would be open."

"When did he say that?"

"He said it several times, sir, and about a week ago the last time."

Robins turned the handle of the door; it

was not locked. A dim light was in the room, but a screen before the door hid it from sight. When he passed round the screen he saw, upon the square marble-topped arrangement at the head of the bed, a candle burning, and its light shone on the dead face of the Skeleton, which had a grim smile on its thin lips, while in its clinched hand was a letter addressed to the proprietor of the hotel.

The Living Skeleton had given more than the 80 francs to that deserving charity.



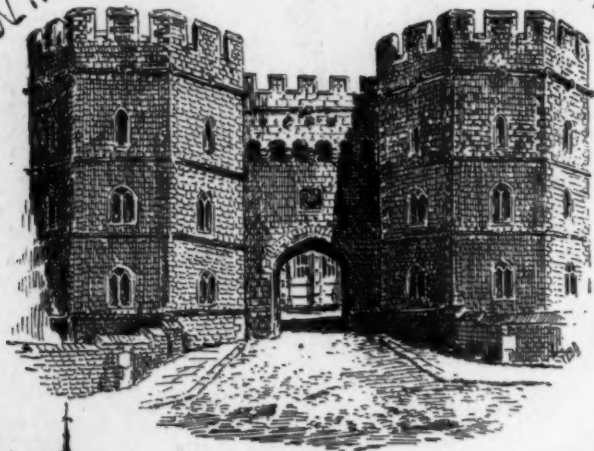
THE GIRL PRECEDED ROBBINS.

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"THE LIVING SKELETON HAD GIVEN MORE THAN THE EIGHTY FRANCS."

Windsor Castle and its Memories.



BY PHILIP MAY

THE home of our Queen at Windsor is superior, both in situation and antiquity to any other palace in the whole wide world; and it has been the residence of so many of our sovereigns, that its history is identified, to a considerable extent, with that of the kingdom; yet, old as the Castle is, it still retains the glow and poetry of romance.

Edward the Confessor had a palace at old Windsor; and here Earl Godwin, being suspected of having compassed the death of the king's brother, protested his innocence, and said he hoped the piece of bread he was about to eat would choke him if he lied. Whether he lied or not, does not certainly appear; but the earl was choked for all that, and Harold, who was to oppose the Conqueror, succeeded to his father's power, and virtually ruled England for twelve years. Peace was preserved, justice administered, and the realm increased in wealth and prosperity; and had it not been for his quarrel with his brother Tostig, which took place in the royal residence at

old Windsor, Harold might have enjoyed a long and prosperous reign after the death of the Confessor.

One of the last acts of the priest-ridden king was to transfer his abode and lands at Windsor to the Abbey of Westminster; but William the Conqueror (when he came over to England with the ancestors of all those who have obtained land or made money within this realm) is said to have piously remarked: "Pooh, pooh, these excellent monks must not be tempted with deer parks and such vanities!" and to have relieved them of a possession which might have proved to them a temptation and a snare.

William the Conqueror moved to New Windsor; and the new residence is first mentioned in the chronicles of Roger de Hovenden, who notes the gifts of archbishops made by the king whilst there. William Rufus was at Windsor in 1095 with all his council, excepting the Earl of Northumberland; "for the king would not pledge his truth that the earl should come and go in security," says the Saxon Chronicle. Nevertheless, the earl's absence was made a pretence for levying war against him, and he was made prisoner and confined in the Castle.

King John lay here while the first instalment of our liberties was being arranged for; and Magna Charta was signed between Windsor and Staines, at Runimede, a name evidently derived from Rūn and Mede, signifying in Anglo-Saxon, the Council Meadow. Here probably the Witangemote had assembled at times, before the Conquest.

The Castle was greatly altered and improved by Henry III., but the glories of its history begin in the reign of Edward I., who held a splendid tournament in the park in 1307.

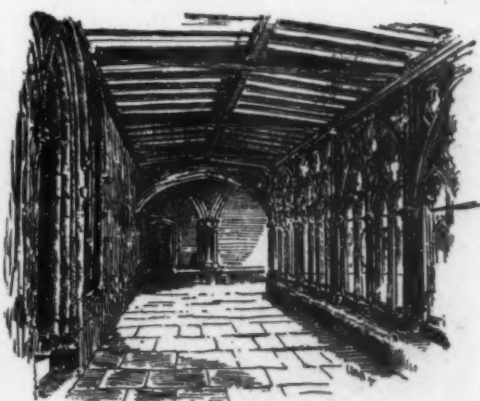
It was not until later in the fourteenth century that the royal residence began to assume its present extent and arrangement, when William of Wykenham, at a salary of a shilling a day, was employed to superintend the extensive alterations and additions made by Edward III.

Under this monarch Chaucer was "clerk of the repairs" at Windsor, and we may fancy the cheerful old poet, with eyes downcast as in a dream, moving through the royal park, while birds were singing and all nature smiled.

The "Roman de la Rose," a French poem of the 13th century, of which Chaucer's "Romaunt of the Rose," is a partial translation, contains an indirect allusion to Windsor. The difficulties and dangers of a lover, whilst pursuing, and obtaining the object of his desires, is the argument of this poem. This design is couched under the allegory of a rose, which the lover, after numerous obstacles, gathers in a delightful garden. He scales lofty walls, and forces the gates of adamant, and enters enchanted fortresses, inhabited by various divinities, some of whom assist, and some oppose, the lover's progress. In one adventure, the lover is invited to dance, by "Courtesy." Among the company are "Largess," held by the hand of a knight, kinsman of Arthur of Brittany, and "Franchise," white as new fallen snow. The reference to Windsor occurs in the lines:—

"By her [Franchise] daunced a bachelere,
I cannot tellen what he hight,
But faire he was, and of good height;
All had he ben, I say no more,
The lordes sonne of Windesore."

The lord of Windsor was, no doubt, the king of England, at the

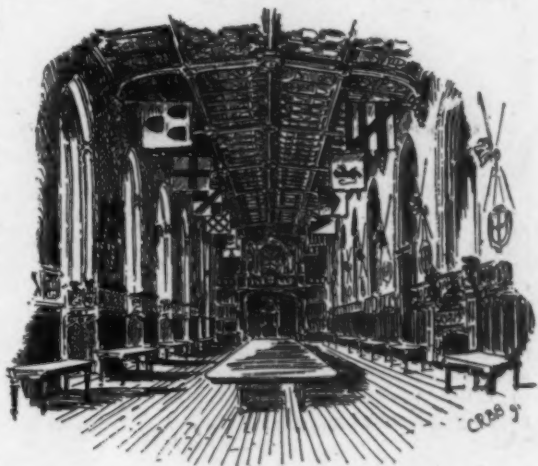


THE DEAMERY CLOISTERS.

time the "Rose" was composed, probably Edward I.

In imitation of King Arthur, the imaginary founder of British chivalry, Edward III. determined to hold a round table or assembly of knights at Windsor, open to all comers; and there was a brilliant assemblage of English and foreign chivalry, which brought the king so much glory in an age devoted to feats of arms, that it was repeated a year later, and again when the monarch returned from Crécy.

About this time, we first hear of the Garter as a badge or ornament with the motto "*Hony soit qui mal y pense*," the true meaning of which is "Shame to him who thinks ill of it," the popular translation, "Evil be to him who evil thinks,"



ST. GEORGE'S HALL.



THE NORMAN GATE.

being altogether erroneous. The chronicles of the time do not afford any information as to the origin of the remarkable badge; but the romantic incident to which its extraordinary symbol has been ascribed, is neither absurd nor improbable.

The popular account is that, during a festival at court, a lady happened to drop her garter, which was taken up by King Edward III., who, seeing a bystander smile, exclaimed, "*Hony soyt qui mal y pense.*"

In the spirit of gallantry, and according to the custom of wearing a lady's favour, the king is said to have placed the garter round his own knee. The anecdote, which is as old as the reign of Henry VII., *e ben trovato si non vero*. It not inaptly illustrates the manners and customs of the time. The true knight, whether of royal or humble birth, was bound to protect every lady from any pain or unpleasantness; and the king was a gallant knight, or, in other words, a true gentleman.

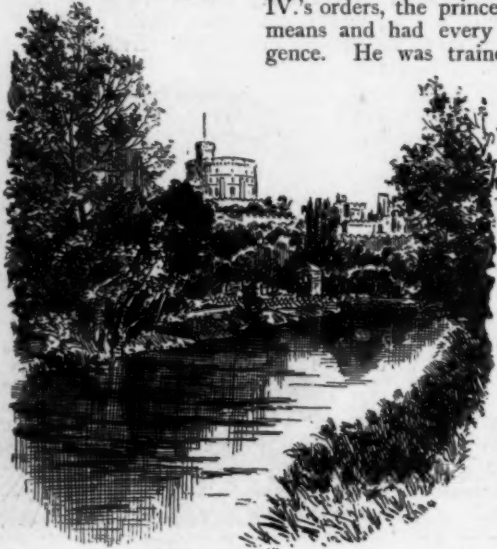
Several romances of chivalry and captivity are

intimately connected with Windsor. When the Black Prince took King John of France a prisoner, at the battle of Poitiers, the prince made a banquet for his prisoner, upon whom he waited at table. Having made a truce for two years with France, he conducted his royal prisoner to London, which he entered, in procession, riding on a little palfrey by the side of the king, who was mounted on a splendid white steed, and attired in royal apparel. Edward III. came to meet them, and vied with his son in courtesy to him whom the fortunes of war had made their guest. John was entertained at Windsor, and having signed a treaty, he was conducted with honour to his own country; but, being unable to fulfil

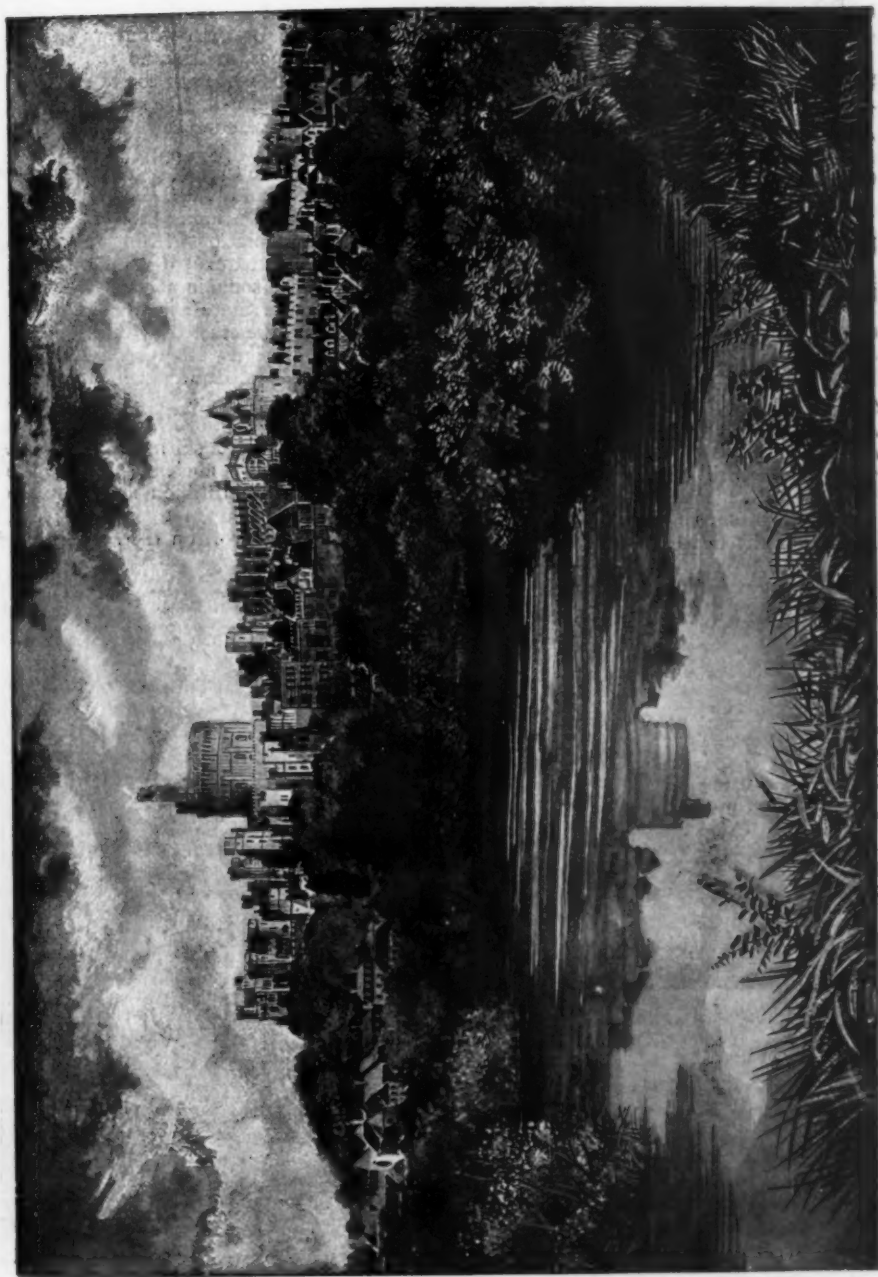
all the conditions of the treaty, he voluntarily returned to captivity, and soon afterwards died in the Savoy.

Another prisoner of state was James I. of Scotland. Dissensions in the royal family crippled the power of Scotland at the very beginning of the fifteenth century; and the weak king, Robert III., deeming the life of his son in danger, caused the young prince to set sail for France. The ship, however, was captured by English vessels in 1405; and then began a gentle and generous captivity, which was certainly of advantage to the poet king. By Henry IV.'s orders, the prince was provided with means and had every luxury and indulgence. He was trained in all arts and

arms, and became a scholar and a cavalier; and at Windsor, too, looking down into a garden fair below, he first saw Lady Jane, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, and grand-daughter of John of Gaunt. Describing the commencement of love's young dream, the poet—who had inherited the crown of Scotland on the death of his father—says:—



THE VIEW FROM THE LOCK.



THE HOME OF OUR QUEEN AT WINDSOR.

"And therew^e kest I down myn eye ageyne,
 Quhare as I saw walkyng under the toure,
 Full secretly, new cumyn hir to pleyne,
 The fairest and the freschest zoung floure
 That ever I sawe, methot before that houre
 For quhick sodayne abate, anon astert,
 The blude of all my bodie to my hert.

"And though I stole abaist tho a lyte.
 No wonder was ; for quby ? my wittes all
 Were so overcome wt pleasaunce and delyte,
 Only through letting of myn eyen fall
 That sudaynly my hert became hir thrall
 For ever, of free wyll ; for of menace
 There was no token in hir suete face."

Describing the lady fair, he continues :

"In her was youth, beauty, and humble port,
 Bounty, riches, and womanly feature,
 God better wote than my pen can report ;
 Wisdom, largesse, estate, and cunning lure,
 In every poynt so guided her mesure
 In word, in deed, in shape, in countenance,
 That Nature might no more her child advance."

And this model of girlish perfection the young king wedded, and found her not less worthy than his poetic imagination had pourtrayed. Still the king remained a captive until 1424, when he was liberated, in order to secure England from the hostility of the Scots, the Protector of the

Realm during the infancy of Henry VI. finding that he had enough to do to hold his own against the French.

Good Queen Bess, to whom we owe so many good things, first caused the terraces to be made, thus giving to the royal abode what is, certainly, neither its least striking, nor least attractive characteristic ; and it is said, that when in Windsor, in 1593, she asked Shakespeare to write a play, showing Falstaff in love, and that the *Merry Wives* was acted at the Castle in that year.

Until the Restoration nothing much was done by the Stuarts to Windsor ; but Charles II. made some important additions, and some of the State apartments, shown to the public, were erected by him.

During the reigns of George IV. and William IV., £771,000 was spent upon the Castle, the money being voted by parliament ; and the alterations and renovations made by these sovereigns have left us but little that is really ancient. Since the Queen ascended the throne about £70,000 has been expended upon the stables ; and these also are well worth a visit.



VIEW OF THE CASTLE FROM THE PARK

ALF'S HISTORY

CHAPTER XII. CROSS PURPOSES.



Alderman Thompson was at a loss to know what to do with his brother's novel; and the morning after Philip's visit to the office he felt inclined to destroy the manuscript. On reflection, however, it occurred to him that Philip might still stay and declare his innocence; and the possibility that his brother might pursue such a course, caused the city magnate much uneasiness. Samuel Soper was not at hand to give the alderman any advice; and the little man had not been to the office since he started to bear the ill news of Philip's departure to the fugitive's niece in Keppel Street.

Hesitating as to his course of action, the alderman glanced at the manuscript, and found it little to his liking; and then, looking for the end of the novel, he discovered the short stories which Dick had written and Lily had asked her father to take to his publishers. At first the alderman was vexed to think that his son had been wasting his time in writing such trifles: but he read the stories, and liked them better than Philip's novel; and then they suggested to him a way out of his difficulty. He could take the parcel to a

publisher, and could say the stories were his son's, without telling an untruth.

The man of business deemed prevarication a necessary adjunct of commercial diplomacy, and he saw no harm in it; but he deemed himself a religious and an honourable man, and he condemned lying as a wife of Satan. The alderman had a code of ethics; but, to suit his own convenience, he could avoid its laws. He also possessed a conscience; but, fortunately for him, this troublesome and unremunerative piece of property was of a very elastic nature, and he was able to stretch it out so as to cover a multitude of sins.

In spite of his cruelty to his wife, the auctioneer still considered himself superior to his neighbours; and this model magistrate and man of business was generally supposed to be a severely moral individual. He would often deliver a homily to the petty offenders upon whom he passed sentence; and whenever an alderman failed in business or did anything that he ought not to have done, Mr. Thompson would declare that a person elevated to such a



THE ALDERMAN BURNED HIS HAND.

lofty position should be both wealthy and blameless.

The auctioneer was not in a happy frame of mind, when he put the manuscripts in his bag and took a hansom to the publisher's; but, on the way to the Row, he comforted himself with the reflection, that Philip was in all probability far away, and not likely to return.

Mr. Paternoster, the well-known publisher, was rather surprised when a clerk handed him the alderman's card; but Mr. Thompson was at once admitted to the publisher's private room, and he placed the manuscripts on the table, taking care to leave Dick's short stories on the top.

"You did not think I was a likely person to bring you a heap of fiction, did you, Mr. Paternoster?" the alderman asked, when they had wished each other good morning.

"No," the publisher replied. "I did not suppose that you were an author when I saw you at the Art and Literature banquet at the Mansion House."

There was an awkward pause for a moment; the alderman was not quite at his ease, and had not made up his mind what to say; and, as an introduction to business, the publisher remarked:

"We used to publish your brother's works; and that, perhaps, is why you are good enough to favour us with an offer of this."

The publisher put his hand on the pile of manuscript; and then, noticing that it consisted of some short tales and a three-volume novel, he smiled. A romance by one of the civic fathers was a novelty likely to be profitable; and Mr. Paternoster honestly mentioned this fact to the alderman.

Anxiety and worry had made the auctioneer nervous; and it now occurred to him that the publisher, or one of his readers, might be acquainted with Philip's handwriting. Still, it was too late to beat a retreat; and so, feigning to be amused at the publisher's idea, he gave a

loud laugh, which was neither hilarious nor cheerful.

"You don't really think that I wrote all that nonsense, do you?" the auctioneer asked, giving a loud guffaw. "I don't think I ever read a novel in my life; and I am sure I never attempted to write one. Novelists represent the world either as a den of thieves or as a paradise intended for flirtation; and their works are always silly, and very often wicked."

Mr. Paternoster knew that there were many persons who deemed all fiction pernicious, though such an opinion as the alderman entertained was not often expressed in his presence; and he was rather amused at hearing novelists and their works condemned by a man who boasted that he had never read a novel, and yet brought him a long story and several short tales.

"Well, Mr. Thompson," the publisher said, glancing at the manuscripts on the table, "perhaps you would not mind telling me who is the author —"

"Of this heap of nonsense?" the alderman continued. "My son has only just finished these tales, and I want you to oblige me by reading them to-day. He has just taken his first-class in classics at Oxford, and I am afraid success has turned his head, and made him think that he is overflowing with genius, and that it is a moral duty, which he owes to society, to preserve every drop of the stream. Now, what I want you to do, is to disabuse his mind on this subject; and I can assure you that the young man will be indebted to you for life. If you make him understand that he has no talent for writing, he will come to my office and work away

as he should, for he's my only son, Mr. Paternoster, and the business will be his one of these days."

The alderman sighed, as he always did when death was the subject of his thoughts; and Mr. Paternoster, thinking that his judgment might really be of great service to the



"YOU ARE MISTAKEN," MR. PATERNOSTER REPLIED.

young author, agreed to read the manuscript at once.

Then the auctioneer returned to the office, and great was his joy when Samuel Soper told him that Philip had gone away, and that Lily believed her father was guilty. The little man really thought that the girl was convinced, but he was not aware how difficult it is to destroy a young girl's ideal.

In the afternoon the alderman returned to the publisher's, and then he was neither nervous nor embarrassed. "I have come to hear what you think about the trash I brought you this morning," he said, when he had been shown into Mr. Paternoster's private room, and then, seeing that the publisher was reading one of his son's short sketches, he added, "I suppose you have read enough to be able to condemn the whole as food unfit for the human mind."

Mr. Paternoster looked up and smiled; he was not often able to praise the first work of a young author, and to do so always afforded him pleasure.

"I will be candid with you," he began.

"Thank you, I like candour," the alderman answered, as he rubbed his fat hands together, eagerly expecting to hear some witticism at the expense of the absent author.

"I have not read all these short tales; but, judging them by the one I have just finished, I should say that they were written some time before the novel. They would do very well for a magazine, I dare say, but they are of no great value. As to the novel, I should tell you that I was rather busy this morning, and as you wanted our opinion to-day, I handed the novel over to our reader; but, when I asked him about it after lunch, he spoke so highly of the opening chapters, that I determined to read the manuscript myself. For a first novel it is very good indeed, and we shall be happy to pay two hundred and fifty pounds for the copyright."

"Two hundred and fifty pounds!" exclaimed the astonished alderman.

"Ah!" said the publisher, "you think that very little for all the time your son has spent on this novel. I dare say you are right, but it costs us a great deal to advertise the work of an unknown author, and there is a considerable risk. In this case I do not expect we shall get our money back on the three-volume edition; but the author has talent, and he is sure to write again, and when he has made a reputation we shall make our profit on the cheap edition. We really could not afford to give more, though we should be glad to publish the novel."

"I don't want my son to become a hack-writer," the alderman answered. "There's a business ready for him to step into, and I don't want his head upset with a pack of love and nonsense."

"You are mistaken, I assure you," Mr. Paternoster replied, passing his fingers through his long hair, and wondering whether the alderman really thought the manuscript worthless, or if he considered that the sum offered was too small. "The novel is a good one, though it would not be a safe investment for us if we were to give a high price."

"You don't quite understand me, Mr. Paternoster," the alderman replied. "I want my son to become an auctioneer, not a scribbler. I dare say there's not a single writer who makes half as much as I do in a year; and if my son is encouraged to think that he's a literary genius, he won't take to our work. I shall take away the manuscript," the alderman continued, "and I hope you'll not put any false ideas into his head if he should come to you; and of course you'll not write to him, for, if you did, it would be his ruin."

"If you really mean what you say, it would be of no use for us to discuss the matter further," the publisher answered sharply, being vexed to find that his time had been wasted on a manuscript which was not for sale.

When Mr. Paternoster opened the door for the auctioneer, he entertained a very



"HE BEGAN TO SNORE, IN A LOUD, IF NOT ARTISTIC, MANNER."

low opinion of those men who believed that all novels were bad ; and he was determined never again to read a manuscript brought to him by such a person. The alderman, who was profuse in his thanks, returned home ; and, upon his arrival at the Manor House, he went immediately to the library and began to tear up Philip's manuscript. This process, however, took too long, he found, and he placed the novel in the grate and took a match-box from his pocket to set fire to the work which had cost his brother so much pains.

Still, at first, the matches would not strike, and then the paper, being in a pile, burnt but slowly. The delay irritated him, and he hurt his hand when he tried to take out a few burning sheets in order to set fire to the side of the heap which had not yet caught. Then Dick entered the room, and when the young fellow saw his tales on the table, and his uncle's manuscript burning in the fire-place, he looked at his father as if he expected some explanation.

"I am sorry you've been wasting your time on such trash, and I hope I shall hear no more about it," the alderman said angrily as he left the room.

It was not too late to save a part of the manuscript from the flames, and Dick rescued all he could. He had called at the house in Keppel Street, and there he had learned that Lily had come down to Romford, and that she did not know where her father was. The young fellow walked up and down the room two or three times, lost in thought ; and then he glanced up at the clock, and seeing that it

was nearly dinner time, he took up all that remained of the manuscript and went away to dress, determined to ask his father for an explanation, and to speak of his love for Lily directly they were alone after dinner.

Aunt and niece were waiting in the drawing room when the dinner gong sounded ; and then Dick entered the room and kissed his mother and Lily. The girl was much embarrassed, for in her aunt's presence she could not tell her cousin that

their engagement was at an end. But her uncle soon appeared at the door, waving his hand as a sign for his wife to lead the way to the dining-room.

After a long grace had been said, there was silence. The alderman feasted, but even dinner did not make him forget the troubles and cares of life ; and he wished his wife, his son, and his niece, to suffer at least as much as he did. He kept all the tit bits for himself ; he hacked the meat which he cut off for the others ; and when he drank he scowled at the company ;

he took more wine than usual, and directly the ladies left the room he began to snore, in a loud, if not artistic manner ; and though he was not able to deceive his son, he made the young fellow understand that he was not in the humour for conversation, and that he did not intend to give any explanation of his conduct.

Dick consequently did not stay long in the dining-room ; and when he had listened to his mother's congratulations, he asked her to leave the drawing-room for a little while, as he wished to speak to Lily. The good lady loved her son dearly, and she



DICK PUT HIS ARM ON LILY'S SHOULDER.

was rather jealous of Lily just then. She thought that Dick might have had his chat with his cousin, and still have allowed her the pleasure of looking at him. It was the first time she had seen him for some months, and she would not have interrupted the conversation of the young people; but she made no complaint, and went away, though she knew that by leaving the cousins together she might incur her husband's displeasure.

When they were alone, Dick put his arm on Lily's shoulder, and she told him all she knew about her father's disappearance, and spoke of the promise she had given never to marry without her father's consent.

"We can never have that now," she said.

"It will all come right in the end," Dick pleaded. "I will find your father and prove his innocence, and then, Lily, you will reward me with your hand."

"I am afraid," she answered, "that papa will never come back to us. He loved me so dearly, and I never thought that he could go away from me without even saying good-bye."

Lily wept, and Dick kissed away her tears, and smoothed her dishevelled hair.

"I will not lose you," Dick answered. "You love me, and you shall be mine, even if I have to spend the best years of my life in searching for your father. He is a good man, Lily," the young man continued, "and I am sure he never committed a crime. I am determined to prove his innocence, and when that is done I shall come to you for my reward."

"It was because of the suspicion which had fallen upon him that he refused his consent to our marriage," the little maiden answered, with her eyes modestly turned away from her companion.

"To whom did uncle intend to take his manuscript?" the young lover inquired.

"To Mr. Paternoster," Lily replied.

"I saw my father burning the manuscript this evening, when I came in," Dick said.

"Oh, papa will be so vexed," she exclaimed; and then, remembering that he

might never hear of its destruction, she added, "if he ever comes back to us."

She wrung her hands and wept, and her lover, kneeling down by her side, tried in vain to comfort her.

They were lost in their own sad thoughts, or they would certainly have heard the alderman's footsteps, which, even when he wore his slippers, were none of the lightest. But whether lovers laugh or weep, they inhabit a world that is all their own, into which it is not fitting that grosser mortals should penetrate. The result of such intrusion is often disastrous to all concerned; and when the alderman entered the room he lost his temper, Lily blushed, and Dick rose from his knees in anything but a calm frame of mind.

"Please remember," said the alderman, looking savagely at Lily, "that I won't have any philandering here. I have taken charge of you out of charity, but I'll have none of these little games going on in my house."

"Whatever has happened has been my fault," Dick replied.

"Whatever has happened indeed," repeated the alderman. "I should just like to know what could happen between you and a girl whose father is a thief, and whose mother—"

"My uncle is an honourable man, and my aunt was a noble woman. As to Lily, I hope soon to make her my wife," Dick said, interrupting his father.

"You little snake!" the enraged alderman



"YOU LITTLE SNAKE!" THE ENRAGED ALDERMAN EXCLAIMED.

exclaimed, "to come here with your designing arts in order to try and entrap my son into marriage! I wonder that the bread of charity which you eat doesn't choke you!"

"Lily has won my love," Dick answered firmly, "but not by any designing arts. I would make her my wife to-morrow, but she refuses to marry me until her father's innocence is established."

"You will have to wait a long time for her, if you don't marry her until that happens," the alderman said, with a sneer on his face.

"I will prove his innocence, and bring him back to us," Dick answered resolutely.

"But perhaps, father," he continued, trying to smile pleasantly, "you would not mind telling us how you became possessed of uncle's manuscript, and why you destroyed it; the information may assist me in my search."

"You impudent rascal!" shouted the alderman, seizing his son by the collar of his coat and shaking him.

The young fellow had kept his temper up to this time, but now he became angry, and Lily put her hand upon his shoulder and said:

"Dick, surely you won't strike your father."

"No, Lily," he replied, "I will not do that, but I shall leave the house at once."

"That you shall!" exclaimed the alderman, letting go his hold upon his son's coat. "Out you shall pack this very night, and never a brass farthing of my money shall you receive!"

"I will work for my own living," Dick replied.

"Out of my house you go this moment!" the alderman shouted in his rage.

"God bless you, Lily," Dick said, turning to the little maiden whom he loved. "I will prove your father's innocence, and then I shall come back to claim your hand as my reward."

The young fellow kissed her, and then ran up stairs to his mother's little sitting room.

"Mother," he said, "I am going away again. I have quarrelled with my father, but it was not my fault. Kiss me at once, and let me go; for if my father finds me here, he will be angry with you."

A few minutes later the young man left the house; he had only a light purse in his pocket, but his hopes were high, and his heart was light. He had set himself a noble task, and one difficult to accomplish; but healthy youth has ever a store of hope and self-confidence, and Dick expected before long to prove the innocence of his uncle, to make a name for himself, and to come back and claim the hand of his fair cousin as his reward.

CHAPTER XIII.

A PERSISTENT SUITOR.

When the alderman rose the next morning he was tired and angry. He complained of his breakfast, saying that the kidneys were not fit to eat; and afterwards, when he went to his room, he heard Lily's canary singing, and swore that he would have no such noise in the

house. He sent his wife to fetch the little bird of song, and when she returned, he put his hand into the cage, and seized the little creature by the neck.

"It is Lily's canary, and Dick gave it to her," Mrs. Thompson exclaimed, as she saw what her husband was about to do.

"We keep the thief's brat out of charity," he said, "but we're not going to provide for a parcel of birds. As he spoke, the strong man wrung the canary's neck; and, when the pretty creature lay dead in his hand, he put it back into the cage to see if it would move again, as some birds will after a sudden death.

His timid wife shrank from him in loathing; but he called her back, and bade her take the cage and its dead inmate to the girl, who was mourning for her father.



"MOTHER," HE SAID, "I AM GOING AWAY AGAIN."



LILY COULD ONLY SIGH AND WEEP.

The poor woman left the room, though she had no intention of complying with her husband's cruel order, and soon afterwards the alderman started for the city, where men respected and honoured him.

When he arrived at the office, Samuel Soper was already there; and the little man had received a letter from the hospital nurse, in which she said that she had received no answer from her husband, and requested her champion to call again. The alderman read the letter and laughed, for now that Philip was gone, he was no longer afraid of the woman.

When the head of the firm told the junior partner that he had turned Dick out of the house for making love to Lily, the little man listened attentively to the alderman's words, and it occurred to him that her uncle would be glad to give the girl a dowry in order to get rid of her.

"Now," said he, when the alderman had done speaking, "for a good many years I've not been a marrying man, but I feel I'm getting on in years, and I'd like to settle down. What I want to know is, am I to take the aunt or the niece? Polly Smith is a fine figure-head of a woman, which Lily ain't; but then the little one has years before her, and she's sure to develop, whilst the big one's sure to decline. I'm over forty now, and you're older, Mr. Alderman Thompson; still, if the insurance tables are to be trusted, I ought to have time to see the young girl grow up and get into her prime. But these scientific sta-

tistics ain't always to be trusted, for a man may go off at any moment, in spite of the actuaries."

Samuel Soper paused a moment, and then continued in a more poetic strain: "Polly Smith is like a ripe, red rose, whilst Lily resembles a blushing bud of promise. The one is likely to decay soon after it is plucked; but I must remember, with regard to the other, that many a pretty beginning comes to naught, and that in the most promising bud the canker worm often lurks concealed. You see, it's six to one and half-a-dozen to the other, and so I'll leave the choice to you, and take either of the women, with a dowry of twenty thousand pounds."

"Why the one is a married woman, and the other wouldn't have anything to do with you," the alderman replied.

"You need not trouble about that. There is something indefinite in my manner that makes all the girls run after me," Samuel Soper observed.

"You don't think this something indefinite will induce me to give you twenty thousand pounds, do you?" the alderman asked.

"Indeed," Soper replied, "that is exactly what I do expect. Here have I been slaving for you for years, committing felonies and misdemeanours without end—"

"Hush—hush!" exclaimed the alderman.



THE ALDERMAN COMPLAINED OF HIS BREAKFAST.

"I'm not going to hush," said little Samuel Soper, getting up and arranging his coat and waistcoat, like a bantam cock giving a last touch to his feathers before going into action. You owe your twenty thousand a year to me; and all you give me is a beggarly thousand a year."

"You had a thousand pounds for saying a few words to my niece not long ago, and you shall have another thousand when that business about the nurse is satisfactorily settled. Besides, Soper, you're my partner, you know," the alderman said, puffing himself out as much as possible in order to make the little man understand how great was this honour.

"Partner, indeed! A pretty sort of partner you are! What I say is, share and share alike. If you don't like that, give me one of these women that I'm in love with, and twenty thousand pounds. I'd take 'em both at the price, if that were permitted; but as it ain't, I'll leave the choice to you."

"But neither of them would have you, Samuel, my boy," the alderman answered.

"Oh, I'm Samuel, your boy, now, am I?" the little man inquired, in no amiable tone. "I'm a fine youngster, I am, and 'ave taken a long time to grow; and I can tell you that those creatures which don't develop in a hurry are the finest animals in the end, for they've more staying power than those that spring up sudden, like mushrooms, and die away before you know they're there."

"But if I were to say, 'Go to Lily, my boy, win her, and I will give you my blessing,' what would you do?"

"For that fair flower, and twenty thousand to boot, I'd do anything," the little man replied, twirling his moustache in order to look fierce. "But if you said the other

sweetheart, you know, I should embark for the dangerous cruise of matrimony with less to fear and more to cling to."

"No, no," said the alderman, "you can't have my sister-in-law as a bride. If Philip comes back, he must find his dear, deserted wife ready to receive him with open arms. But if you like you may take Lily, and retire from business; and I'll give you a thousand a year all the same."

"Well," said Samuel Soper, assuming the attitude of a bather about to dive, "if I must plunge in, here goes. But you must make it fifteen hundred, for a fellow who hurls himself into marriage is like the

Doge's ring that they threw into the Adriatic, as he can't tell whether he'll find repose and peace, or if there will be unruly currents and the roaring of an angry and disturbing element."

"I will give you a thousand a year, and not a half-penny more," the alderman answered.

"Well," Samuel Soper said, after a little consideration, "it's a bargain, and there's my hand upon it. I'm going to beard the lioness in her den; but my paw, you see, is as steady as an



THE ALDERMAN KILLS THE CANARY.

avalanche."

"How are you going to set to work?" the head of the firm inquired.

"Ah!" said Samuel Soper, slyly, "you don't know the sex as I do. A woman of imperial proportions likes to be treated with that courtesy which was shown to dames and damsels fair by gallant knights in days of old; but Lily ain't that sort. I gave it her too strong last time, and that's where I made the mistake. Girls in their teens like to take their love and their liquors diluted, and you must send them home their article about as weak as the milkman delivers his concoctions."

"Dick seemed to be giving it to her hot and strong," the alderman replied.

"You don't understand women, and you can't expect to have the knowledge of them that I possess. I've been making them my special study all my life, and I may tell you that girls of her age fancy they're in fairy-land, and each expects that a handsome young prince will come sailing over a bright sea in a golden argosy, to find her waiting for him in a high tower, which no one can enter who comes without the magic *open sesame* of love."

"Will you bring this mysterious article down to Romford to-day, so that you may commence proceedings at once?" the alderman asked.

"Well," Samuel Soper answered, "it is rather sudden, you know; but they say that a man who's about to dive in shouldn't stay too long shivering on the bank."

So it was arranged that Samuel Soper should commence his courtship at once.

Lily, after the alderman had started for town, had retired to her room to be alone. Her father was gone, and she blamed herself because she had not won his confidence; and Dick, whom she loved, was gone too, and she had been the innocent cause of his banishment from home. Dick, she hoped, would be able to prove her father's innocence, and to bring the wanderer back; but she could only sit and sigh and weep, and the live-long day passed, bringing to her no relief and no release from sorrow.

She still wore her mourning, but her dresses were faded and shabby, and the costly furniture of the mansion made them conspicuous. She had bought no new costumes since she left the house in Gloucester Grove, and now, for the first time, she felt that she was not suitably attired. She was not eager to array herself in bright robes, which would have been out of all harmony with her gloomy thoughts; but she regretted that the crape was faded, and that she could not replace it.

When sorrow reigns, even trifles have the power to annoy, and she went down to the drawing-room feeling ashamed as well as sad. But she soon forgot her own humiliation in beholding that of her aunt, who had taken too much wine, and was waiting, in fear and trembling, for her husband's return. The poor woman was aware of the fault which she had committed, and was expecting punishment; and she was so afraid of her husband's anger that only



"ALL THE GIRLS RUN AFTER ME," SAID SOPER

with the greatest difficulty was Lily able to persuade her to go to her room, and to plead the headache, of which she complained, as an excuse for not coming down to dinner.

Lily had taken her aunt upstairs, and was waiting in the drawing room, when the alderman and Samuel Soper arrived; and just as she was thinking what she should say to her uncle, the little man entered the room, and offered her his hand.

"Well, my dear, how are you?" he asked, smiling in what he considered his most captivating manner.

"You must excuse me," Lily said, attempting to pass him, but the little man stretched out his arms, so that she could not move from her place.

"I've made it all right, my little flower," he said, "and you are to blossom in future for yours truly, Samuel So'er. We're to be left alone, and I'm to have fair play, and no spoke is to be put in my wheel."

"Would you kindly let me pass?" Lily said haughtily.

"The last time I spoke to you here, I hadn't your uncle's permission to address you; but I have now, my dear," Samuel Soper said, paying no heed to her words.

"Mr. Soper, I insist upon you allowing me to pass," Lily repeated, trying to avoid his outstretched arms.

"I'm sure, my pet, I'm actuated by the most honourable intentions," Samuel Soper observed, dodging about to prevent the possibility of her escape.

"Perhaps, my dear," he continued, when she was no longer making any effort to pass him, "I may have startled you when I last spoke of love. I may have been too hasty, and, if so, I apologise. Prince Rupert, you know, was rash and zealous, and some say that I take after that gallant cavalier."

"I consider your language an insult," Lily said, looking at the little man disdainfully.

"You need not be angry with me, for I shall do you no harm," Samuel Soper continued. "You've no call to turn up your nose at me, I can tell you; for I've been called 'Handsome Sam' before to-day by many a good-looking wench, and I'm not a poor man, either."

"I shall request my uncle to protect me," Lily said, making a last vain attempt to get away.

"Now don't you be a fool, Lily," Samuel Soper continued. "You've been aiming at high game, but you've not brought him down. You just touched him up on the wings, but now he's off again. I don't pretend to have as much gold on my plumage as young Dick, but I ain't a sparrow for all that. Still, if you had him, he'd never lay any more golden eggs, and after a year there wouldn't be the price of a pot of beer between you. As to the young Cupids that have a habit of coming after matrimony, they'd have to run about as naked as those you see in the Academy. Just think the matter over, and remember I quite forgive you for what you said the last time I was here. I know that every

fashionable young lady rejects the addresses of the gentleman whom she secretly admires, when he first asks for her heart. I thought you weren't quite so high-toned, you know; and this ignorance, and the impetuosity of my passion, must be my excuse for my making such a dashing onslaught at first. A regular charge of the light brigade, wasn't it?" he asked, smiling.

"I will never marry you," she said, looking fiercely at the little man, who drew back a little. But then the door was opened, and the alderman entered, and Samuel Soper rallied his retreating courage.

"We sallied forth against the enemy, but we were driven back, and lost some of our guns," he observed to the alderman.

"I am sorry to hear it," the great City man replied. "Mr. Soper has my good wishes, Lily, and I trust I shall hear of no further opposition."

"I shall never marry Mr. Soper," Lily replied.

"You will think better of it," the alderman answered pompously, "for I approve of the match, and wish it to take place."

"Women," observed Samuel Soper, "don't like to lower their colours when the first shot is fired. At them, again and again; and if you keep it up long

enough they'll treat in the end."

"Well, well," said the alderman, "we had better go to dinner without more ado: if you give way to your feelings, Soper, anxiety as to the future will deprive you of half your digesting power, whilst worry about the past will rob you of the rest."

When the three were seated at the table Samuel Soper stared at Lily and said: "Hate can see much, but love more; whilst jealousy can equal them both, for it is love plus hate."

No one replied to him, and he continued: "Because my rival has younger eyes than mine it doesn't follow that I'm altogether blind; and, as a matter of fact, Samuel Soper can see as far through a brick wall as most people. I own I'm forty, and I'm



"I TAKE AFTER PRINCE RUPERT," SAMUEL SOPER SAID.

proud of my age; for if I were younger now, I should be in my grave."

"Ah! Samuel," said the alderman, "the world smiles upon the young. Their good looks are accepted as a proof of innocence, and their joviality as a proof of frankness; whilst their dissipation is passed over as exuberant mirth, and their vice as a peccadillo. But when your features and form have lost their just proportions, people call you a glutton; if your nose is red, you are a sot; if you have wrinkles, they denote cunning; and the world says that your prudence is niggardness, and that your knowledge of the world's worthlessness is a morbid melancholy. If you give money away in charity, those who can't afford to give declare that you're ostentatious; and, do what you will, some one is sure to swear that you're a hypocrite, because you're a better man at forty than you were at twenty."

"For my own part," said Samuel Soper, "I can't say that I am much better; but I want to be. The time has arrived when I ought to begin to think of kingdom-come, and I'm ready to settle down." He looked

at Lily, who sat opposite to him, and he allowed his eyes to enjoy her beauty, whilst he was satisfying his flesh with more substantial food.

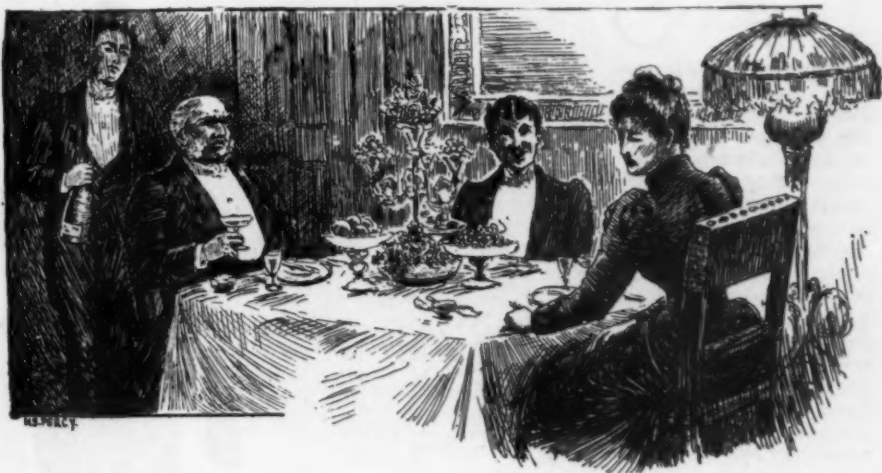
"A girl who sits under somebody else's mahogany should think twice before she refuses an advantageous offer," the alderman observed.

"Why, alderman," said Samuel Soper, "where is your gallantry gone to? You should blush to acknowledge such sentiments."

"Blush, indeed, should I!" exclaimed the alderman. "Here's a girl whose face is her fortune, and yet she won't realise it at an opportune moment."

Lily would not listen to them any longer, and she rose to leave the room; but Samuel Soper went to the door, and before he let her pass, he said:

"My heart has been stolen, but I am not going to prosecute the poor girl who robbed me; she has set my cheek on fire, but I don't accuse her of arson, and she is trespassing on my most tender spot, but I'm no policeman, and I don't say, 'Move on!'"



In order to complete the serial with the first half-yearly volume, the rest of this Story will be published next month as a Supplement.



HERE is a modest coyness about the ordinary London suburban street, sheltering as it does a multitude of strange men and women behind two rows of bay windows, two clean pavements, and a circular-breasted road. You may, perhaps, judge of who is hiding there by the manner in which the two-yard square front garden is kept, or, with slight practice, the style and cleanliness of the window curtains will tell you something; but otherwise, the streets of a suburban residential neighbourhood are much alike, particularly in a fog.

By the way, there is something a little bit absurd about losing your own house in a London fog. For six years you have lived there and paid rent and rates without ever having had to accommodate the broker's man on the dining room couch. The result is you feel certain of being able to lay your hand upon your own door knob under any atmospheric conditions.

But one fine autumn morning—the sear leaves on the balsam under the front window indicate the season—you set out for the City to find everything in a fog. The gas is burning all day, and your train journey home at night is to the tune of bursting fog signals. You then further discover that the fog in the neighbourhood of your suburban retreat is much denser than it was

in the City, but you easily make your way to a swing door beneath a huge lamp at the corner, and here you stay half-an-hour, taking something warm to keep the fog out. Careful man.

Then you start the short walk home, thankful that you know the streets so well. On the way you cogitate upon the ease with which you might be robbed in such a fog, and this thought facilitates your movements.

Why, how quickly you must have come; this is your street, there is only to cross and get to the other end, and you are home.

You cross over and walk towards the other end, but it seems a terrific way off. Has the street been stretched since you left in the morning, or what has happened?

"What a fool you are!" (mental ejaculation only.) Of course, your street is the first to the right, and second to the left; this is — road you are in now, you



"A LIPT INTO YOUR HOUSE, SIR?"

know it as well as possible. How strange the first to the right and second to the left looks in a fog, you hardly recognize it. Your house is the last but two from the bottom.

You are standing in front of the last but two, and unless your ground floor bay window has grown into a three-story bay, and your seary balsam into a gawky sunflower—unless these strange things have happened—then this is not your home of the last six years, nor, if it comes to that, is this your street.

It is useless attempting longer to deny, even to yourself, that you do not know where on earth your street is. It will be necessary to inquire of a passer-by. You wait a few minutes for one to pass, but the passer-by seems to be otherwise engaged; the police, too, are evidently very busy elsewhere.

A triple alliance 'twixt your nose, watch, and a wax taper prove it to be close on eleven o'clock. This accounts for the fact that the lights are out in most of the houses, and you don't care to get people out of bed to inquire the whereabouts of your own street and your own house. You might have dropped into a public-house and obtained the necessary information, but you particularly selected this residential neighbourhood because it was free from public-houses. At this point you are feeling utterly miserable, and the yellow fog grows denser.

The local St. Paul's strikes eleven. Good gracious, you promised your wife to be home by the 10.30 train without fail. She will sure to be thinking you are dead, drowned, or mangled in a railway accident.

It is no use fooling about longer, so you take the next turning. A footstep—a slow, solid footstep. How you bless those limbs of the law as they approach you.

"Oh! constable, where is — street?"

"You are in it, sir."

You attempt to look as though you were not in the least surprised, and in doing so slip off the kerb and nearly fall. In spite of the fog you detect a broad smile on the face of the P.C. Then he quietly remarks, "Shall I give you a lift into your house, sir?"

As he takes your arm, you are impressed with the idea that this man thinks you have had too much to drink. But you are too miserably wet to feel indignant, and a shilling passes without a murmur. Your wife sympathizes with you in a quiet, cool way, and makes you feel rather more foolish than when

you stood alone in the wrong street. Nor do you go to bed much happier for having heard your wife's sister remark that "Dear George doesn't seem quite himself to-night."

While some people lose their way in a fog, others lose their temper, and for equally reasonable reasons. There are a certain class who seem to regard the



WAS HE A DIAMOND MERCHANT?



NOTHING LAUGHABLE ABOUT HIM.

suburban streets as their own estate, a place in which they have the right to create the most unearthly disturbance. A friend of mine recently informed me, in great confidence that, were he suddenly appointed Shah of Persia, he should immediately invest in two guillotines, purchase of the British gov-

ernment all the milkmen and newsboys, ship them to his own domains, and there decapitate them in cold blood. This is not a pleasant idea, but let anyone who has tried a quiet Sunday at home, in the suburbs, ask himself on Monday morning whether he thinks this punishment too extreme.

You have spent a restless night, and just dosed off in the early morn, when a strange cry, something between a shriek and a howl, rings through your chamber. It is only a bright-faced little newspaper boy, who is innocently trying to pronounce the names of all the Sunday papers in one shriek. Bless him! You wake up, and listen, as the sweet voice dies away in the distance, and you sometimes wish it might die clean out of existence. But there are other things coming. Listen to that beautifully rounded cat-call that every now and again disturbs the entire atmosphere of the neighbourhood. It is the voice of a man, and he is supposed to be sighing "milk." Personally, I could never understand why milk should not be sold like any other commodity, but I am informed that it is absolutely necessary men should come round, and, at the risk of bursting a blood vessel, announce their

presence with loud and prolonged howling. Vendors of other luxuries follow in due course, in fact, the kindly attention one's every need receives in a suburban street is a feature of modern civilization, a feature that begets pleasant thoughts of the dark ages, when the milk-can and the newspaper were unknown.

If you would pry into the hidden peculiarities of the London suburban street, you will find much information in a local directory. Ordinarily, your next door neighbour is an entire stranger to you, but this book will give you an idea of what profession each man follows, and, though you never may speak to him, yet you are able to entwine his coming and going with fanciful ideas.

Take that tall, thin man with a little head, and well-coloured face. He has pale, grey eyes, light hair, and light moustache. He comes and goes as though he had no object in life, and always wears a buttoned-up frock coat around his small body, and carries a cane. There is nothing laughable



HE HAD BEEN TO THE NORTH POLE.

about him, nothing tragic. I wondered who he could be for a long time, and, at last, thought of hunting him up in the directory. There, he was, "L—, T. J., private detective." Why, how strange I had not thought of it, just the man for the profession. His quiet, nothing-to-do air, was part of the business, it was his way of tracking murderers, and discovering evidence in breach of promise cases, etc. This thought pleased me, and I did not like to let it go when the landlord of the house told me that Mr. L—, hadn't had a case in hand for eighteen months, and owed two years' rent.

The old gentleman next door I do happen to know something of, though the directory is silent as to what he is, or was; and he never speaks to anyone. But neighbouring servants will talk, and in this way I learned that the white-haired old fellow, who is up at three in the morning, and busy with his flower pots, was an officer in the expedition that went to discover the North Pole. He did not find it, and this seems to have hopelessly disappointed him.

There is no need to fish up evidence concerning the gentleman opposite. He informs you, on the least provocation, that he has played in every London play-house of note, and has toured the world. He is always just on the eve of a big engagement at a salary such as is seldom paid a comedian. You have only to drop into his club, and he will tell you a great deal more. In a weak moment you accept the invitation, and, after an "interesting" evening, spent among members of the profession, return home at dawn in a hansom with a bursting headache. However, you can but admire the devil-may-care manner of the man until you learn that his pale-faced little wife spends her days keeping the home together for the sake of the children, and

ekes out the shillings while he borrows and spends the pounds.

It was some time before I learned who that tall, square-shouldered man was with a thick beard. He lives in the last house in the street, and has always a pre-occupied look, and is rather pale. He might have been the manager of an iron works, but his hair is too loose for that.

The head of a bank, I thought, but then he was not neatly dressed enough. Further than that, he has a habit of leaving home about lunch time, and only returning in the small hours of the morning. You may always hear his hansom rattle by, just after your first sleep. I had given him up, when it somehow came out that he was the editor of a daily paper, and was in the habit of thinking out his leaders on his way to town. Sometimes, I think, there is a connection between this man, and the Sunday morning imp, but no matter.

The word "merchant," after the name of a short, thick-necked, middle-aged man, who also lives down the street, set me wondering for some time what sort of a merchant he was. He has a tall, handsome wife, and this added to



HE WILL TELL YOU A GREAT DEAL.

the interest. Was he a diamond merchant, or was he one of those men who deal in wild animals, and send their emissaries into the jungles of the world collecting stock? Anyhow, he is not a man who would do the collecting himself. All my household could tell of this merchant was that he left home about eight o'clock in the morning, and returned about the same time at night. It was quite accidentally that I discovered the nature of his merchandise. I have a weakness for a piece of fresh Gruyère cheese, and often go in search of it myself. One evening, I turned into a large, quiet looking establishment, in quest of my particular

fancy. I got just what I wanted, and went to the counting house to pay. Having picked out the necessary coins, I was about to congratulate the gentleman in charge upon his stock, when I recognized my neighbour of the thick neck. Then he was not a collector of wild beasts, nor diamonds!

Special reference has been made to this collection of neighbours, as showing the peculiarity of a London suburban street. Here, side by side, are gathered men of every occupation, each going and coming day by day, without the least thought or care of what the other is doing. The actor and the journalist, the merchant and the detective, live and sleep side by side, pass and re-pass in the street, and yet know no more of each other than the Zulu does of the Esquimaux.

But now and again our street experiences that touch of nature which makes even suburban neighbours kin.

Two years ago a fire broke out at the corner, in a widow lady's house. She lived with her two little daughters and servant.

It was in the early morning, and our neighbours turned out to a man. It was time to throw off reserve, and while the North Pole old gentleman talked as he had not been heard to do before for ten years, the editor sent a paragraph of the event to his own paper, and then turned up his shirt sleeves and helped to save the widow's goods. "Let me rescue the dear children," cried our friend of the footlights, and a fireman having handed him the two little girls, he bore them to his wife in melodramatic style. Ever since he has told the story of how he rescued the dear children from a fearful death.

In this way the street was thrown together, but in a couple of days it had cooled, and was frigid as ever. Certainly, when one of the residents die, we all lower our curtains, but that is for mere decency's sake. The quiet street tells no tales to the outsiders. We are content to bury our own trials and troubles behind our own brick walls, and go neither to the right nor to the left for sympathy.



THE MAN WITH A THICK BEARD.

FOOTBALL

BY C. W. Alcock.

ACCORDING to an old writer, "A winter piece should be beautified with all manners of works, and exercises of winter, as *footballs*, selling of wood, and sliding on the ice." Since then, centuries have left their foot-prints on the sands of time, and still to-day the flying ball remains one of the favourite pursuits of athletic youth. The old order changeth, giving place to new, with only one effect, so far as football is concerned, to have raised it from the low standard of a rough and barbarous pastime, to a foremost place in the calendar of British sports. The history of football illustrates, and in a most forcible fashion, the theory of the revival of the fittest. A halo of antiquity encircles its early days. Its origin is enshrouded in the mists of obscurity. Ball games, as the veriest tyro in classical lore knows, were popular at Rome, as well as with all the states of Greece. That handball was an amusement of the youth of both sexes, among the Romans, there is plenty of contemporary evidence to prove. In the course of time, it is fair to suppose, the foot would come to be the instrument of propulsion, and many writers have been venturesome enough to claim that the *sphairomachia* of the Spartans were football matches. There is, at least, an element of probability that ball-play on some organized lines, football perhaps, in its primitive state, may have come to us as a part and parcel of the various habits and fashions introduced into Britain at the time of the Roman invasion. Certainly, rightly or wrongly, there seems to have been a common idea that the football celebrations with which Shrove Tuesday used to be commemorated in different parts of England, were the perpetuation, in one form or another, of incidents in connection with the Roman invasion, or actually the survival

of customs brought with them into Britain.

Whether it was primarily a mere importation, or a sport of pure native growth, is after all a matter of no great importance. That it was a regular amusement of English in the thirteenth, or, at the latest, in the fourteenth century, is quite certain. Nor was its popularity confined to the north alone. On the contrary, football was in vogue as one of the pursuits of the London school-boys at a date antecedent to the first actual mention of the game in the more northerly regions of England, and on the other side of the Tweed. Fitz-Stephen, writing at the end of the twelfth



PLAY!



From Photo by]

THE ENGLISH INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION TEAM, 1890.

[R. P. Gregson, Blackburn.

century, in a notice of the various pastimes of the youths of London in the reign of Henry II, says: "Annually, upon Shrove Tuesday, the youths go into the fields immediately after dinner to play at the well-known game of ball. The scholars belonging to the several schools have each their own ball, and the city tradesmen, according to their several crafts, have theirs."

Football had become so general that it came under the ban of the warlike King Edward III. The preference for other sports was seriously interfering with the proper practice of archery, so much so, indeed, that in an edict issued in 1349, the king "forbade throwing of stones, wood, or iron, playing at handball, football, and cambucam," on pain of imprisonment. Yet, in spite of counterblasts and royal statutes, there does not seem to have been any limitation in the practice of football. At the same time the work of repression was not carried on very effectively. It was found necessary, indeed, to pass other Acts with the same object in the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV. Considerably later, too, Henry VIII found himself under a similar necessity, and the Merry Monarch even carried his severity so far as to make it a penal office for anyone to make money by providing accommodation for those who affected sports of any kind. No doubt the roughness and lawlessness engendered by the football celebrations in different parts of the country were sufficient justification for the disfavour into which it gradually got in the opinion of the higher classes.

That learned monarch, King James I, indeed, was evidently so fully convinced of its dangers as to give it a prominent place in the set of rules he addressed to his son, entitled "Nurture and conduct of an heir apparent to the throne," addressed to his eldest son Henry, Prince of Wales, and called the "Basilicon Doron; or, King's Christian Dutie towards God." How great was his dislike may be seen in the decree he issued



MR. A. M. WALTERS.

From a photo by Barraud, 263, Oxford Street, W.

in connection therewith: "From this coast I debarre all rough and violent exercises as the football, meeter for laming than making able the users thereof."

Still, in some cases, these royal enactments were after all apparently never meant to be taken *au sérieux*. The law makers, in fact, were themselves the law breakers. It was certainly of little real use to pass an Act directed for the suppression of football and other "unprofitable sportiss," as was done by one of the Scottish kings, when he himself did not show the smallest disposition to give up active pursuit of the

game. Yet the fact remains, that only a very short time after Parliament had passed an Act with this object, there is a record, in 1497, of the Treasurer of King James IV. paying two shillings "to James Dog to buy fut balls to the king," when he was at Stirling. Under the circumstances, it is hardly a matter for surprise that the game came not long afterwards to be much affected by all classes,



MR. P. M. WALTERS.

From a photo by Barraud, 263, Oxford Street, W.

and in most parts of Scotland football was just the kind of exercise to attract the hardy races north of the Tweed. The "land of the mountain and the flood" was the scene of many of the most interesting ceremonies in the primeval days of football.

Fastern's E'en, as Shrove Tuesday is known to Scotchmen, was the occasion for most of the football games, as in England. In no place was the Shrovetide festival conducted in a more hearty spirit than at the Cross of Scone. The game was between the bachelors and the married men, and the object of the former was to dip the ball three times in a deep place in the river, the goal on the one side, of the latter to put it three times into a small hole on the river, the goal on the other. Curiously enough, it was not allowable to kick the ball, and in case neither goal had been forced during the game, the ball was cut in halves at the finish. There was, as may be imagined, no regard for persons, and, in fact, the game was so rough and the players exhibited at times such unnecessary violence, as to give rise to a proverb: "All is fair at the Ba' of Scone." Nor was there any restriction of sex at these contests. Men, women, and boys alike had their share of the enjoyment. A custom prevailed in a certain parish in Mid Lothian for the married women to play the single at football yearly, on Shrove Tuesday. It is

rather significant, too, to find that the married were always victorious. Speaking of the manners and customs of the inhabitants, the minister of Kirkmichael, in Perthshire, said: "Football is a custom of common amusement of the school boys, who also preserve the custom of cock-fighting on Shrove Tuesday." In the Border counties, football gave scope for many a hard tussle, a mimic representation realizing, in some small degree, the excitement of the frequent raids between the restless spirits on each side of the Tweed.

Readers of Sir Walter Scott will doubtless remember his description in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel," of the amusements of the English and Scotch troopers during the truce pending the meeting of their leaders in front of Branksome Towers:

"And some with many a merry shout,
In riot, revelry and rout,
Pursued the football play."

Some of these old football Saturnalia were perpetuated to a very recent date. At Alnwick Castle the Shrovetide Festival was celebrated not many years since. Shrove Tuesday, at Derby, was a universal holiday, and the whole town showed intense interest in the annual football match, which was between the parishes of St. Peter and All Saints. The ball was of leather, stuffed with cork shavings, and it was a frequent practice to remove the inside and convey the cover under a countryman's frock, or a woman's shawl, so as to evade the defence and goal the ball. Tradition goes further, and states that on one occasion when the enemy was approaching the goal the water-wheel, which formed it, was set in motion by a device of the besieged party.

This copious reference to football in Scotland must not be taken as evidence that the game had been meanwhile languishing in the south. In the Elizabethan era it was still very much in evidence as a popular amusement. The roughness incidental to its practice was still exercising the minds of a by no means uninfluential section of society. This feeling was expressed by Sir Thomas Elyot, the author of the "Boke called the 'Governour,'" published in 1583, who sees in "foote balle nothing but beastlie furie and exstreme violence whereof procedeth hurte, and consequently rancour and malice do remain with them that be wounded. Wherefore," he adds, by way of summing up, "it is to be put in perpetual silence."

Still, it was a frequent amusement of the



A RUN WITH THE BALL.

better classes, and mention is made of an accident which befell Lord Sunderland while playing with Lord Willoughby and his servants against a body of country people. Charles II, too, was interested in the game, to judge by the account of a match, in 1681, between the king's servants and those of the Duke of Albermarle, which gave such gratification to his Majesty that he made the principal player on the duke's side a present of a guinea.



HEAD WORK ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD.

Sports and pastime of all kinds flourished bravely during the Tudor dynasty. In spite of the philippics of writers like Stubbes, who considered the game to be "a bloody and murthuring practice, rather than a felowly sporte or pastime," football lost none of its popularity. That it occupied a prominent place among the amusements of the people, is fully shown by the frequent allusion of poets and historians during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In his "Knight's Tale," Chaucer makes a passing reference in the lines :

"Ther stomblen stedes strong and down goth all,
He rolleth underfoot as doth a ball."

The divine William himself alludes to the game twice at least in his plays. In the "Comedy of Errors" he makes Dromio ask :

"Am I so round with you as you with me,
That like a football you do spurn me thus?"

In the last scene of the first act of "King Lear," he refers (and certainly not in a very complimentary style) to the football player, when he puts the following into Kent's mouth :

"Nor tripped neither, you base football player"
(tripping at his heels).

Until the end of the seventeenth century, it is clear that the game was a favourite amusement of the London apprentice. Though the busy streets of the Metropolis were hardly the most fitting arena for a display of football force, yet the autobiography of Sir John Branston shows that it

was the custom to urge the flying ball in those crowded thoroughfares in the seventeenth century. Even Pepys himself has an entry in his diary, in connection with a visit he paid in January, 1665, to Lord Brouncker, in the Piazza, at Covent Garden, "That the streets were full of footballs, it being a great frost." Still it is not easy to understand how the citizens of London tolerated such close relations with these flying squadrons of football players if the picture Gay gives us in his "Trivia" is accurate :

"Here, oft my course, when lo ! from far
I spy the furies of the football war ;
The prentice quits his shop to join the crew,
Increasing crowds the flying game pursue.
But whither shall I run ? The throng draws nigh,
The ball now skims the street ; now bounds on high ;
The dextrous glazier, strong returns the bound,
And ginging sashes on the pent-house sound."

Football under such conditions, one is bound in sadness to admit, went far to justify Bishop Butler's taunt, when he forbade the game during his head-mastership of Shrewsbury School, "That it was only fit for butcher boys."

Sir Roger de Coverley, writing to the *Spectator*, in 1711, an account of a country wake alludes incidentally to a football match which formed part of the amusements, at the same time placing on record his own active connection with the game in that he had played many a match himself. Still the advent of the eighteenth century seems to have been the signal for a gradual

decline in the popularity of football. It is certain that the game was still played in some form or other, and an entry in Hone's "Every Day Book" under date of 1831, shows that Irishmen were wont to occupy their Sunday afternoons with football matches in the fields between Oldfield Dairy and Copenhagen House, near Islington. In Scotland, too, it was still extensively patronised in the early part of this present century, witness the match at Carterhaugh, in Ettrick Forest, between the Ettrick men and the men of Yarrow, which was fittingly commemorated by Sir Walter Scott, then Sheriff of the Forest, in a couple of songs.

Still the game had generally fallen into comparative disuse in most parts of the country at the commencement of the Victorian era.

To the public schools is due, in a great measure, the fact that it never became actually defunct. Though each school, true to its traditions, retained its own particular game, they were mainly the source of the movement which has resulted in the advancement of football to a foremost place among the athletic sports of the day. A little over thirty years ago there was little reason to predict a revival which has produced the only serious rival cricket has ever had in the public estimation. That

football, in a little over a quarter of a century, should have obtained such a hold, is, in fact, one of the most remarkable developments in the history of sport. How much of it is due to the administration of the two great governing bodies it is not for me to say. Wide as poles asunder, still experience has shown that there is ample room for both the Football Association and Rugby Union games.

It is a pity that the attempt of the elder body, the Association, which was formed in 1865, to adopt a code which should be acceptable to the leaders of the two sects, did not meet with success. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, pity 'tis 'tis true." The advantages of one game, and one only, are obvious enough. Still it is pleasant to know that, in the absence of any chance of such a consummation, the sister codes are both flourishing, with every possibility of continued success.

Into the merits of the game itself, I have not space to enter now, though I hope to have the opportunity of dealing with it practically, as it is played to-day. Still, the accompanying sketches will serve for present purposes to perpetuate the best type of contemporary players. The author of "Tom Brown's School Days" has claimed for football that "it is more than a game, it is an institution," Q. E. D.



THE GOLDFIELDS OF MASHONALAND.

BY F. HARMAN



Pioneers has sounded the "dismiss."

Men who have for many months been associated together as troopers, under military discipline, now realize that, in a moment, all communism of sentiment is at an end, and individual interests again become paramount. With this new, unbuilt town for a starting point, the race for wealth commences, and endless may be the goals where Fortune waits to award her favourites with a golden prize. In the go-as-you-please competition, now commencing, with some two hundred at "scratch," all modes of progression are permitted. Very brisk was a sale of surplus horses, and, had

E have reached Fort Salisbury. The British South Africa Company's brand new flag has been run up and unfurled in the breeze, to the salute of the booming guns and the crackling rifles; the last lusty cheer has been given, and for ever and for aye the cheery bugle of the

donkeys been able to be purchased, the English "coster" would have held up his hands in wonder at the prices they would have realized. The inevitable bullock, so indispensable to African travel, is keenly sought after, and parties of prospectors are made up to utilize, to its fullest extent, an ox wagon and team to carry them and their belongings into the unknown and trackless wilds.

One enterprising party of officers, some of whose members have been in Mashonaland before, slip away in a Cape cart, drawn by four horses, and make for Hartley Hill at a gallop. Opinions are divided as to the justness of such a proceeding, but when on their return a rumour runs round camp that some stone carrying gold has actually been brought back, and the glittering specks of the precious metal can be seen by any enquiring eye, a feeling of relief goes round, for here is, at last, positive proof that the auriferous wealth of Mashonaland has at least some substantiality. Spirits rise; for what one man has found, another may.

Arrangements for departure are hastened, good-byes said, the bullocks inspanned, and a start is made. Let us accompany one of the numerous waggon parties. It is a nice fresh morning, with the usual south-easterly wind rising with the sun. Every one is excited with the novelty of being his own master again, and snatches of song are carolled gaily. Each one is a "good fellow," an "old pal," or a "brick." The Kaffirs



HARTBEESTE.

accompanying the party are on their best behaviour, and grin as they endeavour to understand a polyglot tongue, largely camp English, but with a few Dutch and Kaffir words interspersed. Just as a start is made, a member of the late sailor contingent strolls up to say his bullocks are useless. "Why?" "Well I'm darned if, when my mate Jack cracked the whip, they knew the signal; the blooming beggars just ported their helms, and sheered off." Great is his disgust, when the laugh has ceased, to be informed that he is mistaken in supposing bullocks come in at command.

Now we are off, but it is slow work; and after covering, at the outside, seven miles in about three hours, the bullocks show symptoms of weariness, and a desire to clip the grass rather than devote all their energies to pulling; so we have to stop and outspan, until the heat of the day is past. Far in the distance are a herd of Seesebe, so one of the party starts off to stalk them, but the light is bad, and the distance badly judged, as the ball sends up a small cloud of dust under the largest buck, and away they go. Alas! no fresh meat to-day is the thought of the onlookers at the waggon. Though the white man cannot live easily, evidently the Mashona can. One of the party returning with a bundle of firewood with which to boil the kettle, brings in portions of several curious earth balls, somewhat larger than a cricket ball, and made of a reddish clay that he has found lying round a hole, recently dug, amongst

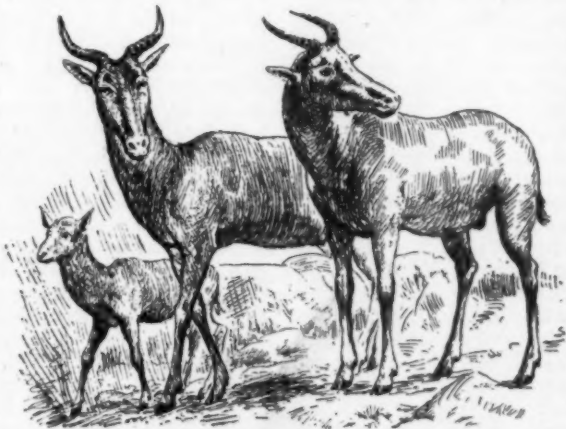
the grass. A further search discovers one unbroken, and this, when opened, shows a lining, apparently made of tiny pieces of dried grass, adhering to which are two or three cells, evidently of a species of honey bee. The wily native had left this, probably, as its weight told him it was too immature to contain enough honey to reward him for the trouble of breaking it open.

Our noonday halt gives time to examine the many pretty species of wild flowers which flourish on the veldt. Several are of a genera known in England. One of the most common is the lobelia, which I have seen in such bright blue masses as, at a distance, to suggest a lake, reposing under a cloudless tropical sky. The jessamine, with large flowers of delicious odour, has a partiality for the larger and annually flooded river banks, forming a tangle that trips up the fisherman following down, his float gliding onward with the current, as he strolls onward, oblivious to all but his expected prey. Lovely lilies grow in the moister valleys, and in many a quiet pool, into which a rivulet enters under protest, lest it should disturb the occupants with its lullaby. Water-lilies float on the smooth surface, their petals, with an under-surface of cerulean blue, and their faces open to the sun, a mass of white with a golden centre. Gladioli peep up amongst the rising grass, the flower refusing to be lost in its rapidly growing embrace, which but too quickly spreads a dense covering over mother earth, until it reaches a height, commonly of six, and not infrequently of eight feet, on the richer soils.



SABLE ANTELOPE

As we lie under the waggon, doing nothing in particular, and watching the cattle wandering off to water, and gazing to repletion on the young grass, a horseman, whom we know slightly, rides up. Veldt hospitality at once offers him a pannikin of coffee, and so far our hearts are generous, as the waggon has three months' provisions in it. How we hope our generosity may be rewarded, when he tells us he has just shot a hartebeeste; his gory hands and knife blade are corroborative evidence that it is not merely a hunter's tale, from the which we have too often suffered. More effusive becomes the welcome, keen the appreciation of the minutest incident in the chase. How we press on him our limited sugar. We could almost jump up, wave our caps, and no less wildly shout hurrah, when he suggests if two of our party were to accompany him, we can have half the carcase. We never thought him half so good a fellow when he was a trooper. On his moving off we accompany him gladly, and return with the spoil just as our chums have, after a good deal of trouble, managed to inspan the bullocks. Then comes the



HARTEBEEST.

pleasant cool evening trek as the sun declines and the wind dies away, and an odour of the sweet scented verbena we have driven over diffuses itself around, until approaching darkness as well as our appetites suggest supper. How delicious to be one's own master again, no night picket, nothing but to collect the firewood and cook the venison, fetch the water from the clear stream, and make the coffee, and then enjoy unimpaired digestion and the pipe of peace. Surely the bullocks will lie down close to the waggon and we can revel in dreams of our golden days in store, of the lucky finds with which we can astonish city financiers, until company after company is brought out with shares jumping up to a premium, and letters of regret at inability

to allot shares become quite a serious item of expenditure. Or shall we find alluvial gold like unto the 185½ oz. which was found on the De Kaap Fields just as a *hors d'œuvre* to whet the appetite and provide the needful for the trip to England about the more ambitious business of selling our claims.

Then we have to discuss our plans whether we shall at once build huts on high ground, as a safe retreat, before the heavy rains, expected later, render locomotion difficult, and to which we may return, if unhappily malaria seizes us in its weakening clutches; or shall we find the gold first and take care of our health afterwards, and let sufficient for the day be the evil thereof? We decide on the former course, and trek for some days along the high land, so as to avoid swampy

places as much as possible, and rivers that would require their banks to be cut down with pick and shovel, and the larger boulders in their beds removed, before our precious waggon could be got through. One morning I ride ahead in company with a Mashona, who has joined us as shikaree, on

promise of a blanket after two moon's service, and whose senses are quickened by the hope of meat. We go over several ridges, but see no game within shot, until they have first seen us and made tracks, and he explains that if he is allowed to go ahead over the next rising ground, the chances are his eyes will be quicker than those of the game, while he will be a less conspicuous object than a horseman. I watch him disappear, feeling conscious that for keenness of vision a civilized man is rarely a match for a savage, and presently I am rewarded by seeing him re-appear all crouched up and beckoning me on. I dismount, and throw the reins over my horse's head on to the ground. As my steed has had the advantage of having had a Dutch hunter as tutor, he knows that reins so thrown down mean stop till further notice.



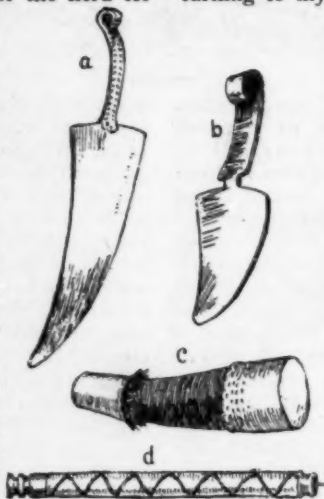
MASHONA MODES OF HAIR DRESSING.

My guide, to whom a horse is an unknown, and, therefore, unkanny beast, thinks this good, and glides along ahead, until we reach the crest of the hill. Then he stops and motions for me to proceed to a bush whose topmast leaves I can just see some way down the slope. Creeping to this, hat in hand and rifle at the trail, I stop and get breath, and then, cautiously rising, take a peep at the landscape. Verily it is a fair one, blue mountains in the distance, tree-covered hills on either side, and in the front an open grassy valley with a line of willow trees and rushes, showing where a tiny stream meanders down to meet its fellows, and form a brook. But what sends a keener sense of enjoyment like an electric flash through my veins, is the sight, in the foreground, of a herd of about a dozen sable antelope grazing in the open, right ahead of me, and quite unaware of danger. Never having seen one before, I put up the two-hundred yard sight with diffidence, and then selected the biggest of the herd for my target. A tremor and a what's up sort of look was all the result of the shot, which I heard strike with that peculiar sound one knows so well betokens a hit in the body. The air was so still, and my position so hidden, the herd did not know what to do or which way to go, so I had ample time to put in another shot, and then a third, yet still my buck did not drop. Feeling, however, sure of him, and knowing we wanted meat badly to dry and make into "biltong," I then turned on the leaden hail to the second largest, and, so bewildered were the herd, they actually came towards me, advancing at

last so close that no sight was necessary. Two shots were plugged into number two, and then, within ten yards of each other, both of the grand animals sank on to the ground as I emerged from my cover. On running up, and examining my prizes, I found all the bullets had struck, and in vital parts; but such is the vitality of the larger South African antelope, that death did not result for some minutes. Meanwhile the survivors fled, their black backs and sides glistening gloriously, and the lighter shades on the belly looking still lighter as they galloped gracefully away in the bright morning sunlight. My Mashona evidently thought he had joined a mighty hunter, and, borrowing my hunting knife, commenced flaying with a skill that told of constant use, nor could he help an expression of delight at the rapidity with which the weapon enabled him to work as contrasted with his own feeble locally-made blade of malleable iron. Returning to my quiet steed, I mounted and

cantered back to the wagon with the good news of meat galore; and, guiding it to the scene of the fray, we outspanned for the day. Like vultures scenting carrion from afar, Mashonas soon appeared and assisted at cutting up the meat into long slips, and hanging it on poles to dry for future use; but we soon found they required constant watching, and their ideas of remuneration were out of all proportion to work executed.

Here was now an opportunity for barter, and messengers were sent to the kraal, from whence our dusky assistants came, to say we were prepared to

a AND b, IRON HANDKERCHIEFS.
c, SNUFF-BOX. d, NEEDLE, IN CASE.

trade the products of the chase for the gifts of the soil. Soon a motley throng began to accumulate, not unpleasing in expression, but not exhibiting signs of any great amount of brain power, often simple looking and not unfrequently with a somewhat Jewish type of face. The ladies do not affect the modest boot lace kilt of the Bechuanas, but prefer dirty little leather aprons, which are a constant source of trouble from their stiffness. Many of them have curious patterns in raised stamp work over their

bodies, others a band of similarly raised dots across the forehead. They have their heads shaven or wear their hair short, and one of the party had her ear lobes tied back with a grass band beautifully plaited, the two ends being unfrayed to form tufts in the ears. Squatting down, they soon unbend the fixed expression of sullenness which, like our own damsels, they but too frequently assume before strangers, giving a suspicion that they regard an unknown man and a villain as much the same individual. Evidently Mother

Grundy stalks abroad as much in Mashonaland as in happy England. This awkwardness past, smiles break over their faces, and the feminine tongue assumes its proverbial anxiety to get through as much work in a given time as possible. They are evidently pleased, too, at compliments paid them in a tongue they know something of, by one of our down country Kaffirs, whose jaws, oiled with free libations from a pot of Kaffir beer, brought early on the scene, and

quickly purchased, run at a great rate. He, like many of his race, is an orator of no mean order, and must have studied declamation under a good master. His powers are now exerted to the uttermost, and his persuasive eloquence is much to his white master's advantage, he, poor man, not yet realizing the necessity of looking on time as of no moment when bartering in Africa. Our friend eats in imagination the luscious entrails of the slain buck, never so sweet before; while he is politely

incredulous at the Mashona's impudence in pretending his corn is really good. And when one is detected in passing off some old grain, sadly worm-eaten, the scorn stop is pulled out, and chords of indignant remonstrance resound at the iniquity of the vendor. Dulcet tones of insinuating endearment follow, when he tries to persuade a maiden that her well-developed charms would become ravishingly irresistible if but a red handkerchief were hers, to wind around that shaven pate. Such a salesman is well worth his beer, nor

do we grudge the deep libations he so frequently resorts to. And still our visitors arrive. Men stroll in, chiefly remarkable for the pains bestowed on their woolly locks by the clever barber. One has an oblong patch left by the razor on the crown of his head, longer front to back than from side to side, while his friend prefers to wear his the other way about. Next comes an exquisite with his locks reduced to a row of five paint brushes, each carefully drawn in at



A WAGGON "TREKING."

the base by some well plaited grass, corresponding to curl papers, and another is satisfied with three across-wise. One has coarse woollen curls, short and compact, another is proud of their length and massiveness, while again others seem to rest content with mere nobs or tufts. The majority find a use for their locks as a receptacle to carry any trifle for personal use, such as a needle in its case, a snuff box, or a handkerchief, or body scraper, which is in much request on a warm day, when perspiration has to be removed frequently. The snuff box depicted is of polished black horn covered at the larger end with skin, tightly stretched, while this fastens itself by the natural shrinking of the skin in drying. Dents are ingeniously punched in rows all round so as to make it appear as if sewn on. The snuff is extracted by moving the loose skin at the lower end, to which the hair still adheres on its inside surface. For purposes of adornment, the feathers of the ostrich, of the bright blue jay, or vivid green parrot, or segments of fox's tails are sometimes worn, but they seem less in request than the products of civilization. Beads of antique make are greatly prized, and little pendants of a dozen or so strung on a dirty tendon, are much appreciated. The trouser button lost by the sportsman scrambling over rocks regardless of the wear and tear of clothes, will be picked up by any of his dusky following and, if bright, added to the head-gear, and, all innocent of their advertising properties, the pictures on preserved meat tins find acceptance.

Brass wire formed into necklaces, armlets, bracelets, and anklets, is a popular article of adornment with both sexes, and our friends now arriving form no exception. But how particular they are! If not exactly of the kind they have been in the habit of wearing, and most of which have been handed down as a precious heirloom from generation to generation, it is passed over with a sneer. It would seem they are

unable to graduate their tastes. Things are either very valuable or absolutely worthless, they have no mean. Their clothes, consisting of a few dirty bits of skin, are best passed over, but some of their weapons are ingenious. Smelting their own iron ore into malleable iron, they manufacture their own assegais, hatchets, and arrow-points, and often, alas! to be taken from them and turned against their friends by a marauding impi of the dreaded Matabele.

They have ingeniously made wooden bowls, scooped out, and decorated by the action of fire, and a variety of wicker baskets. Their sacks for carrying corn are bolster like in shape, the better to be borne on the shoulder, and are made of bark and the fibre of plants, patterns being formed by dyeing the fibre different colours before using.

Interrogating our visitors as to the resources of the country, we are assured that game abounds, that they have supplies of grain and vegetables ample for our needs, and that they will only be too happy to show us gold, and, as an earnest, they produce a small quill with a few grains in it, which they assert they have washed from a river bed within a short distance. Have we reached the Eldorado, then? Everything looks couleur-de-rose, so we decide to stop for awhile at any rate, and put up a hut for greater comfort. We stroll around, and fix on a knoll commanding a fine view, as the site for our residence, and the early dawn sees us a self-constituted fatigued

party, with axe in hand, and stern resolution marked on each brow, selecting trees to fell and carry from the adjacent wood. Somewhat like the Swiss Family Robinson, of our boyhood's story book, we seem to have all the material for our rough shanty provided us on the spot, as we make the delightful discovery that the bark of the tree we are felling for supports is fibrous, and well adapted to tie on the reapers, while its removal from the wood makes the latter look better, and



MASHONA GRANARY.

lessens the ravages of a tiny boring beetle, which, otherwise, infests the wood and causes a continual cloud of fine, brown powder to descend, in puffs, on the heads of those beneath. By breakfast time we have made quite a show, and are in the highest spirits, and talk lightly of building, not one hut only, but a store, a bedroom-hut a-piece, a living room, and a kitchen. Then the Mashonas, who have contracted to bring in bundles of grass for thatching, come in with what we think miserable loads, and immediately proceed to help themselves to pounds of meat with the evident intention, after lighting a fire, of doing nothing but eat for the remainder of the day. We remonstrate, and they decamp astonished at our vigorous ways, and, humiliating though it is, we have to knuckle under and parley, or our house would remain a skeleton until we turned grass cutters. Eventually peace is restored, and they camp at the edge of a wood, making themselves temporary bough huts, in which they light a fire to smoke the meat and themselves alike. No ventilation is attempted, and the smoke emerges through the hole left to crawl in at, and at any other crevice it can find. Breakfast and a pipe over, work is resumed and kept up until evening, when we descend to a stream trickling down an adjacent valley, and enlarging now and again into a deep pool, into one of which we plunge and enjoy a delightful swim. In the morning we had given a Hottentot boy, who was one of our party, directions to make himself a comfortable roofed hut for a kitchen, with one thought for his comfort, but another for the advantage it would be, when thunder pealed and tropical rain descended, to have a dry kitchen and a store for dry wood. We had likewise intimated that at sunset our dinner should be ready. Returning from our bathe, we find the honest but slothful "John" quietly resting after having erected his idea of a dry hut.

He is wrapped in contemplation and a coat of which he is very proud, though it is much too big for him, and although the cooking pots around suggest new bread and a stew, there is an absence of aroma when a lid is uplifted, and we realize, if we want dinner punctually, we must not trust to a Hottentot's idea of time. Some months afterwards the same "John," having accumulated wages, astonished us one day by appearing with a fine gold watch and chain, which he had been inveigled into buying by a driver going down country, and winding it up with a bowie knife. His idea of telling the time by it was, if asked, to first appear not to hear while he turned his eyes sunwards, and, then, having made

a guess at the time by the altitude of the heaven's luminary, to appear to read it from the face of the watch. It was disappointing to find his prized possession failed to alter his inability to hurry or be in time under any circumstances whatever, and I doubt whether the near proximity of a serpent or even a wounded lion would have had an appreciable effect in quickening his movements. Being fond of music, his outfit, when



ANCIENT GOLD GRINDING STONE.

leaving Palapye, comprised a concertina, which I was forced to borrow and stuff with paper if sleep was to be thought of. But as like cures like, the remedy of removing the same when he returned to the bosom of his family, and he could produce unlimited discord to the edification of all his acquaintances, caused us to part with the impression left on his mind that I was an admirable medicine man, and could repair the most wheezy of instruments to perfection.

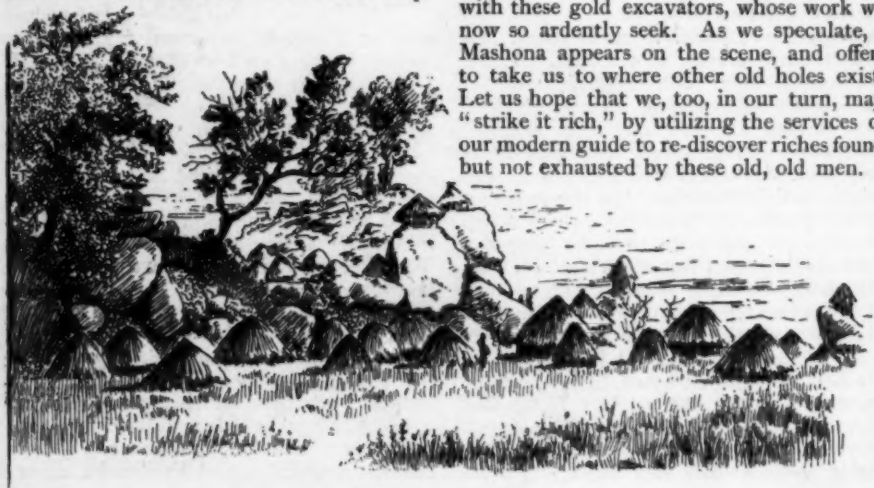
Our huts completed, and, I am sorry to say, the game in the immediate vicinity driven away by our energetic attempts to shoot enough to pay for our labour in meat, coupled with the fact that we could not strike at any gold good enough to "peg out," caused us to abandon, for a time at any rate, our first settlement, and flit elsewhere.

Treking again becomes the order of the day, and, rumours having reached us that Hartley Hill and its neighbourhood still affords opportunity to secure reefs, we turn westward and again halt at a picturesque kraal. Around it are mealy fields and high grass, which almost hide the huts nestling beneath large granite boulders, overtopped with trees, giving a shelter from the noon-day sun. On the boulders, so as to be secure from the ravages of the white ant, or any animal that could enter them by subterranean approaches, are perched the granaries. These are an agglomeration of cells, holding each only a few pounds of grain, which can only be got at by removing one of the lids, kept hermetically sealed with clay, the whole being covered with a circular grass thatch supported by a few poles.

Not only are the granaries diminutive, but the houses, which are often merely of circular basket-work, with a tiny door and a grass roof, are so likewise. Not much larger than well-grown donkeys, are the cattle, which scramble up to be secured for the night in a tiny yard. The sheep, goats, and fowls are all correspondingly diminutive, the birds having less flesh on them than an English bantam.

As we approach Hartley Hill, we see stakes freshly peeled and marked with a name, number, and date, as we ride off the beaten track, and realize that some one at least believes that he has "struck oil." At every fifty yards, in a straight line, they occur, and walking along towards the centre, we come across a hole several feet deep.

Around it is scattered whitish quartz, which seems to have been many a year lying on the surface, and some of this shows signs of having recently been broken. Its not much to look at, this find of our immediate predecessor; but the work done shows that someone before him had evidently moved a large quantity of stone for some purpose or other. We take up a piece or two and examine it carefully, and at length our patience is rewarded by seeing a minute yellow speck or two on a freshly broken surface. Ah, here it is at last, visible gold, but it is a sad descent from our hope-built pedestal, to realize that such an insignificant particle is all we may reasonably hope to find. Then we recall the fact told us by an expert, that only half-an-ounce of gold per ton of stone mined and crushed, is about the average production of the gold mines of the world. Much of this, too, is invisible to the eye, so our speck or two in a pound chunk of stone is not so very bad after all. We wonder, as we note how old seems the original excavation, what people they were who worked it. Here, half buried in the soil, is a granite stone, with a smooth, indented, saucer-like depression in the centre, clearly a mortar of the former toilers, who reduced the stone to powder by rubbing it between two stones. Were they slaves, these humble mill hands, who could have crushed only a few pounds a day by their primitive apparatus? Were their masters Arabs or Phœnicians, or of a still more remote antiquity? Buildings of strange design exist at Zimbabwe and elsewhere, probably co-existent with these gold excavators, whose work we now so ardently seek. As we speculate, a Mashona appears on the scene, and offers to take us to where other old holes exist. Let us hope that we, too, in our turn, may "strike it rich," by utilizing the services of our modern guide to re-discover riches found but not exhausted by these old, old men.



WE MEET ONCE MORE.

WORDS BY EDWARD OXENFORD.

MUSIC BY WILLIAM JOHN HAWKEN.

Andante.

VOICE. *p*

PIANO. *p* *un poco rit.* *p a tempo.*

1. We
2. When

meet once more in af - ter years, When part - ed hands a - gain en - fold; And
sor - row dies, then joy is sweet; And so it is with us to - day, When

smiles are seen in place of tears, For now the new shall be the old! We
lips the self - same words re - peat We spoke in years so far a - way! The

un poco rit.

Ped. *

a tempo. cres.

did not know that you nor I. That life would e'er this meeting see; For
sea - sons may have come and gone, And time out-wrought its rest-less will, 'Tis

a tempo. cres. *cres.*

hope - less seem'd that last good-bye, When breath'd by you, love, and by me!.....
 we who are un - chang'd a-lone, We lov'd of old, are lov-ing still!.....

rit.

dim.

rit.

p Tempo di Valse.

Ah! yes, we meet once more, And lives to - geth - er

cres.

cres.

blend;..... No more to part, but heart to heart, Re-

dim.

cres.

1st time.

- main till comes the end!.....

D.C. 8

2nd time: cres.

- main till

comes the end.....

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CHAPTER XIV. AN AMATEUR DETECTIVE.



DICK THOMPSON went up to London, and passed the night at the Cathedral Hotel; and in the morning he rose early, took apartments in Bloomsbury, and then set out to make his first inquiries about his uncle. He called upon Mr. Paternoster, and the publisher shook hands with Dick, and said that he was very glad to see the young author.

"Would you kindly tell me whether my uncle sent you a manuscript last Thursday?" Dick inquired.

"No, he did not; but your father came here, and we made him an offer for the novel which he submitted to us," Mr. Paternoster replied.

There was a short pause; and then the publisher asked if Dick had brought the manuscript, and was ready to accept two hundred and fifty pounds for the copyright.

"Unfortunately my father destroyed the manuscript directly he returned home," Dick replied.

"Then, if you will take my advice," the publisher said, "you will do your best to reproduce the work from any notes you possess, if you have not another copy of your story."

"But it was my uncle's novel, not mine," Dick answered at once; and this led to an explanation. Dick concealed nothing; and the publisher, who had been present at Philip Thompson's wedding, would not believe that the poet had been guilty either of bigamy or theft. As to the alderman's conduct, he would not express an opinion; but he told Dick that he thought a son should not in any case expose his father to punishment or contempt.

Dick then hurried off to Somerset House, and as he knew the date of the marriage, he had no difficulty in obtaining a certified copy of the register, which stated that a marriage had been solemnised at Trinity Church, in the parish of Haggerstone, in the county of

Middlesex, on the thirtieth day of June, eighteen hundred and fifty-five, between Philip Thompson, aged twenty-one, bachelor and gentleman, of 27, York Street, and Mary Smith, aged seventeen, spinster and milliner, of 28, York Street. The certified copy also showed that Philip Thompson was the son of Edward Thompson, auctioneer and estate agent, and that Mary Smith was the daughter of John Smith, carpenter, and that the marriage had been solemnised, according to the rites and ceremonies of the Established Church, after banns, by John Hollingshead, curate, in the presence of Samuel Soper and John Wilkinson.

This deprived Dick for a time of all hope of being able to prove his uncle's innocence; but then he thought that the milliner, Mary Smith—afterwards Thompson—might have died before his uncle's second marriage. Still, though he searched the index register carefully, he could find no record of the death of any Mary, wife of Philip Thompson; and when he looked at the register of Philip's marriage to Lily Montgomery, he was sorry to see that his uncle was again described as a bachelor.

Still he was loth to believe that the poet had committed a crime; he remembered that the witness to his grandfather's will had signed her name Mary Smith; and he began to search the index for the death of Mary Smith. The index gave the Christian names and surname, and the occupation of the deceased, and the time when and the place where the death occurred; but Dick only knew that Mary Smith was a milliner, that she was seventeen in 1855, and that her father was John Smith, a carpenter.

He looked through several volumes of the index before he came to a Mary Smith, whose occupation was given as a milliner, and whose age was seventeen in 1855; and then he found that the date of her death was earlier than that of his grandfather's will. Still, he entered the particulars on the form which had been given him, when he paid the shilling to make a search; and the attendant soon brought him the volume containing the register of the woman's death.

Dick learned that this Mary Smith committed suicide by drowning herself in Waddon Mill Pool, near Croydon, whilst suffering from temporary insanity, and that she was found drowned on the twenty-eighth day of September, eighteen hundred and fifty-five; she was a milliner, aged seventeen; and the information as to her death was given to the registrar by the coroner of the district.

Having obtained this information, Dick went to the reading-room of the British Museum. He obtained several newspapers which gave an account of the inquest, and in the *Surrey Observer* he read:—

"RECOVERY OF THE BODY OF A WOMAN.

"THE INQUEST.

"On Friday last an inquest was held at the 'Hare and Hounds,' Croydon, before Mr. Johnson, the coroner, on the body of Mary Smith, until lately a milliner's apprentice.

"The first witness was Mrs. Ann Adams, and she deposed that the deceased was said to be a former apprentice of hers, named Mary Smith, whom she last saw alive on the twenty-ninth of June. On that date Mary Smith ran away, and the witness heard nothing more about her until she was informed by the police that the woman was lying dead at the 'Hare and Hounds.' Mary Smith had been seen several times with Mr. Thompson, a cadet at the East India Company's Military College; and witness said that upon one occasion she spoke to her apprentice as a mother might to a daughter, and the girl promised to have nothing more to do with the young fellow."

"P. C. Stentiford stated that on the 28th inst., about two p.m., from information received, he walked to the Waddon Mill. There he saw the corpse of the deceased close to the side of the pond, which was deeper than usual in consequence of the late heavy rains. He noticed that the legs of the woman were tied together with a rope, which was secured to a post on the bank. From this he concluded that the deceased had deliberately committed suicide, as she must have purposely taken the rope there. After she had thrown herself in, with her feet so secured, she could not have got out again. He had the body removed immediately to an outhouse of the 'Hare and Hounds.'"

"The coroner then remarked that, although

he was elected to his office less than a year ago, he had already sat on two young women who had been apprenticed to Mrs. Adams. In answer to questions from the coroner and jury-men, the constable stated that the woman took as many apprentices as she could obtain, and that she generally got rid of them within six months, although she never returned the premiums. The police had kept their eyes on her for a long time, but they were not prepared to bring a criminal charge. The face of the corpse was so much bruised that it would not be possible to identify the deceased; but if his suspicions were correct, this would be the seventh apprentice of Mrs. Adams's who had committed suicide at Croydon.

"John Willing, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., stated that he had made the post-mortem examination. He had come to the conclusion that the deceased had committed suicide, because

there was nothing over the mouth, and because the rope was tied to a post. She had probably secured the rope in order that her body might be found, or in order that it might not be crushed by the mill wheel.

"The coroner then addressed the jury, who found that the deceased committed suicide by drowning, whilst suffering from temporary insanity."

When Dick closed the bound newspaper volume, his mind was perplexed with vague doubts. He had noticed that the body of the woman, who had been found drowned, had not been identified, and he thought it possible that Mary

Smith might still be alive. He deemed it strange that Mary Smith and Samuel Soper should both be connected with his father; and then, whilst he was thinking of them, he remembered that it was his father and not his uncle who had been a cadet at Addiscombe, and his suspicions suddenly assumed a definite form.

The conclusion to which he had come was that his father had married Mary Smith; and when he had examined the Haggerstone parish register, and had seen the peculiar loop under the bridegroom's signature, he felt quite certain of his father's guilt. Dick remembered the publisher's words, and he did not deem himself the right person to punish the man who, he thought, was guilty; but he wanted to confide what he had learned to someone older than himself, and he determined to see his mother and ask her advice.



AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM READING ROOM.

CHAPTER XV.

A FIRST APPEARANCE.



LILY was feverish and excited when she reached her room, after having suffered much annoyance from Samuel Soper's attentions; but she was determined not to stay in her uncle's house, and she began to pack up at once; and when she was too tired to do any more, she thought of her father, and she thought of Dick, until at last she fell asleep. In the morning she felt weary and tired; but she had to dress quickly, in order to

be at the table punctually at half-past eight; and then she had to wait some time in the breakfast-room because the alderman, who insisted upon punctuality in others, came down late as usual.

The alderman looked angrily at Lily, when he entered the room; and his wife, too, sat down at the table without saying a word to her niece. The girl wished to tell them that she was going away, but she had not the courage to break the solemn silence; and she felt ashamed of herself, because she did not dare to mention that which she deemed it right to do. Two or three times she was about to speak, but she could not attract her uncle's attention; and he gobbled up his breakfast, and then hastened away to catch his train to the City.

Lily and her aunt remained at the table, though neither of them had any appetite; and, whilst the girl was waiting for an opportunity to tell her aunt that she was going away, the alderman's wife was afraid that Lily would reproach her for her apparent unkindness. After a long silence, Lily rose, kissed her aunt, and then frightened the poor lady by mentioning her plans for the future. The wretched wife could think of nothing but what her husband would say and do, when he returned home and learned that his niece was gone; and she declared that the alderman

would be very angry, and that Lily's departure was consequently impossible. But the little maiden would yield neither to entreaty nor to command; and she went upstairs to finish her packing, and then came downstairs to say good-bye.

Lily fetched the cab, which took her to the station, as her aunt told her that it would add to the alderman's displeasure if he supposed that his niece had received any assistance in her flight; and, as she took her place in a third-class railway carriage, she felt less miserable than when she was on her way to the alderman's house. She was determined to work for her living, and she hoped to obtain employment as a governess; but she had made up her mind to accept a place as a servant, rather than again submit to the degradation of being dependent upon her uncle's charity.

Mrs. Edwards was glad to see Lily, and she gave the little maiden a hearty welcome; but when the girl talked of going out to service, if she could obtain no other employment, the landlady shook her head.

"No, no," the kind-hearted woman said. "If you think you'll be more comfortable as a governess than you would be here, you can go, and you will always have this home to come to, if the people you are with don't treat you well; but as to your being a servant, it's not right that you should take the bread out of the mouths of those who were brought up to it, Miss Lily; and if you'd thought of the matter in that light you would never have proposed it, I know."

Lily had not considered this part of the question; but she urged that there were more governesses and companions in want of employment than there were servants who could not find places.



MRS. EDWARDS.



LILY OFTEN WENT OUT FOR HER KIND HOSTESS.

"That's all the more reason why you should stay with me," Mrs. Edwards replied. "Besides, when your father returns he is sure to come and look for you here."

Lily looked very sad, and the good-natured woman quickly continued, "I'm sorry to say that I've let your rooms to an actress, a quiet, well-conducted lady, who gives no trouble; but she shall have notice at once, and I can give you a bedroom at the top of the house until she goes. It's not the sort of room that I'd like to offer you, if I had another; but you won't mind just for a week, will you, Miss Lily?"

"If you send anyone away for me I won't stop a day," Lily answered, smiling. "I shall not even be able to pay you for the room at the top of the house; but you must let me help you with the housework, and do what I can to repay you for your kindness."

Mrs. Edwards remonstrated; but finding that Lily was determined, she allowed the girl to do a little dusting and sewing; and Lily, having something to do, had less time to fret over her loss.

Lily and the landlady had many little confidential chats together; and there were no secrets between them. Very few words were said about Dick, certainly; but the few were sufficient to explain all to Mrs. Edwards. As to Samuel Soper, at first they shed tears over the sorrows which he had caused Lily, though subsequently they laughed at his presumption and his folly; but before the little man's courtship was treated as a joke, the landlady had promised that the fellow should not be admitted into the house on any pretext whatever.

Lily had not been long in Keppel-street when she made the acquaintance of Miss Treherne, the actress, who was a pleasant woman of about forty. They soon became friends, and the actress and Lily often went out for a walk together, when the latter would do any little errands for her kind hostess. But Mrs. Edwards only allowed Lily to work to please herself; and as her duties were consequently light, she had plenty of time to spend with Miss Treherne.

The actress told Lily that she was playing the mother of the heroine in a drama at the Adelphi Theatre, and that she had to "understudy" the part of the heroine. She said that there were not any original scenes in the play, but that a considerable dramatic interest, sound morals, and sonorous phrases made it a success.

Lily listened attentively to the words of the actress, and then it occurred to the little maiden that she might make a living behind the footlights; but Miss Treherne tried to dissuade her young friend from making the attempt, and said that after twenty years' experience on the stage, in the provinces and in London, she had come to the conclusion that it was one of the most perilous and precarious vocations which a woman could adopt.

Miss Treherne, however, was glad to teach the little maiden the technicalities of her art;

and she found Lily an apt pupil. She showed the novice how to come upon the stage, how to stand, how to walk, and how to take a chair, and how to sit on it. She told Lily that success on the stage could only be obtained after years of waiting, spent in severe study; but in the girl's mind a theatrical life was surrounded by the halo of romance, and Lily thought she could easily realise a fortune on the stage. She was not avaricious; but she hoped that her father would return, and that she would have an opportunity of ministering to all his wants.

Lily studied the heroine's part, and went several times to the theatre with Mrs. Edwards to see the play. Then the actress gave the girl some more advanced lessons, teaching her how to fall, how to faint, and how to die upon the stage; and Lily studied diligently, and made such progress that Miss Treherne began to prophesy that her pupil would achieve success.

Though she was dazzled by the artificial glitter of the stage, Lily did not forget her father; and one day she went to Mr. Pater-noster to make inquiries. This kind gentleman told her that he had already seen her cousin, and gave her Dick's address; and for the first time in his life he falsified his account with an author. The result of this pious fraud was a balance of twenty-two pounds twelve and sixpence to the credit of her father; and this the publisher made her take. He told her that he would be able to find Philip Thompson some remunerative work, if the poet would only return; and he sent the little maiden happy away, by declaring that he believed in her father's innocence.

Lily was now able to pay Mrs. Edwards, but the girl had great difficulty in persuading the kind-hearted landlady to accept anything, and she could not induce the good woman to take more than the cost of her food.

That night, a little before twelve o'clock, the actress came up to Lily's bedroom at the top of the house. The little maiden had been asleep, but she rose to let in Miss Treherne.

"Well, Lily," the actress said sadly, "I have had my chance, and have thrown it away. After twenty years as an actress, I have played a leading part on the London stage for the first and last time. I am rather stout to play the heroine; and I believe I should have been hissed off the stage, if the manager had not appealed to the audience to overlook my shortcomings, as I had only taken the part, at a few minutes' notice, in consequence of the sudden illness of Mrs. Francis."

"I am very sorry for you," Lily answered, throwing her arms around the neck of the actress who had been so kind to her.

"You must not be sorry," Miss Treherne replied. "My failure has given you an opportunity which you might have waited years to obtain. I spoke to the manager about you, and told him you are letter-perfect in the part; and he has agreed to give you a trial to-morrow night, provided you satisfy him at rehearsal in the morning."

"But I shall be taking the part away from you, if the manager thinks I am good enough," Lily said.

"Oh, no!" Miss Treherne answered. "The manager knows his business too well to let me play the heroine, except as a stop-gap; and if you succeed, you will let me say that you were my pupil, and then I shall be able to give lessons to those who want to go upon the stage. I should like that ever so much better than what I am doing now, Lily, dear; so for selfish reasons, you see, I hope you will be successful." The actress kissed the girl, and smothered a sigh of regret, which would come as she thought of her own failure.

The next morning Lily and the actress were up early; and they went through their parts, before they started for the theatre. Lily felt very nervous, but Miss Treherne assured her that she would succeed; and when they reached the theatre the manager was very polite and kind to the novice. Through the ordeal of the rehearsal she passed satisfactorily; and the actors and actresses inspired her with confidence by praising her acting and doing their best to make her at home amongst them.

The manager told Lily that he would pay her one guinea for each performance, and Miss Treherne congratulated her pupil. They went together to a theatrical costume maker for the wedding-dress which was required, and then the actress took Lily to a shop in Oxford-street to buy two other dresses. Their shopping took them some time, but directly they reached home, Lily sat down to write to Dick to tell him that she had left Romford, and that she was to make her first appearance on the stage, at the Adelphi, that evening.

The heroine of "The Fatal Shot" is the only child of a wealthy country gentleman; but the villain appears upon the scene and claims the estate, stating that he is the son of the Squire's elder brother, who died abroad. The villain is willing to marry his cousin; but the heroine loves, and is loved by, the village doctor; and she only consents to marry the villain, when he has made her believe that her lover is false.

In the second act the heroine returns from church, married to the villain. The marriage

has saved her parents from ruin; but she despises her husband, and she hates him when, in consequence of her refusing his caresses, he boasts of having deceived the poor woman to whom the doctor was only giving medical advice and charitable assistance. The heroine then determines to die; but, whilst she holds the revolver in her hand, her husband is shot from outside, and she in her alarm accidentally fires into the air. Her relations and friends rush in, the dying man accuses her of murder, and she is subsequently arrested.

All, however, is well that ends well. The murder was committed by the woman whom the villain had deceived in Scotland; and when she confesses on her death-bed, it appears that she was his legal wife,

according to the laws of that part of the realm. The heroine is released from custody; and the Squire, who has ascertained that the villain was an impostor, gives the hand of a happy bride to the lover who has always been faithful and true.

There was much applause, when the curtain fell; the actors and actresses were called upon to make their bows to the audience; and when Lily came before the curtain, bouquets of flowers were thrown to her, and the clapping of hands and the stamping of feet showed



THE HEROINE OF AN ADELPHI MELODRAMA.



LILY WAS CALLED BEFORE THE CURTAIN.

that her efforts to please had been appreciated.

Dick, who had been in the theatre, accompanied Lily and Miss Treherne to Keppel-street; and directly he was alone with his cousin, he told her that he was sorry she had appeared upon the stage. She listened patiently to his censure; and then he told her that he was making progress with his inquiries as to the charges which had been brought against her father. He did not give her much information, for he did not wish anyone to share the suspicion which he entertained; but she said that he would require funds for further investigations, and that nearly all the money which she could earn upon the stage should be spent in trying to prove her father's innocence.

CHAPTER XVI. A CASE OF ASSAULT.

DICK wrote to his mother; and two days after he had sent the letter he went down to Romford. He walked quickly from the station to

the house, and when he was told that his mother was not at home, he said he would go to her little room and wait until she returned. But the footman informed him that the alderman and Mrs. Thompson were out of town, and that they would not be back for some months.

Just then Dick heard his father speaking angrily, and soon afterwards the gentler tones of his mother's voice became audible. He did not hesitate a moment, but ran upstairs, and found his mother pleading with her husband to be allowed to see her son. She threw her arms around Dick's neck; and not until she had done this did she notice the alderman's scowling face, or think of the punishment which her brutal husband would be likely to inflict upon her, directly they were alone. When she remembered this, however, she shrank from her son, trembling with fear; and she looked at the alderman, and entreated him with her eyes for mercy. She had not dared to receive Dick without the knowledge of his father; and when she had given Dick's letter to her husband, in his rage he had cursed his son. The alderman had given the footman orders not to admit Dick; and in order to prevent the possibility of a meeting taking place, between mother and son, without his knowledge or consent, he had stayed away from the City for the day.

The alderman was amazed at the intrusion of his son; the Manor House was his, and Mrs. Thompson was his; and when he had separated mother and son, he looked as if he was as much surprised as annoyed at what he deemed the impudent violation of the sacred rights of property.

"Perhaps, young man, you will be good enough to tell us what you want here?" he demanded.

"I came to tell my mother that I have found out who was the husband of Mary Smith, and to let you know that you can still save yourself by a full confession, as all I want to do is to prove my uncle's innocence," Dick replied.

"You ungrateful hound!" the alderman exclaimed. "I have done for you what only one father in ten thousand can and will do for his son. I have given you the best education that money could buy; I was willing to let you step into a business that produces double the income of the Lord Chancellor; and because I won't let you marry a girl who has disgraced herself by going upon the stage, you are doing your best to ruin me."

"Lily has not disgraced herself," Dick replied.

"She came here to eat the bread of charity, but that was not good enough for her; and so she has gone away to feed on

that of shame, which is more to her taste," the alderman said, sneering unpleasantly.

"That is not true!" Dick answered.

"Now, you may go, sir, and never dare to enter my house again. As to my money, you shall never have a halfpenny of it; for I would have it buried with me, rather than you should profit by it. Take care, too, what you do; for if I hear of your slandering or libelling me, I will indict you, rogue and vagabond that you are!"

Dick crossed the room to where his mother was sitting, but the alderman would not allow his son to approach her.

"Don't put your hands on her," the alderman exclaimed. "Leave her alone; for she does not want to be polluted by an ungrateful fellow like you. A woman can't touch pitch without being defiled."

"You and I will meet soon enough for our own good; but I don't know when I shall see my mother again, and I will not leave her without saying good-bye," Dick replied.

"Dick, dear," the weak woman said, "I think you had better go away. It's never any use to oppose your father; for whoever tries to do that comes to a bad end. Two of his clerks started in business for themselves, but they failed, and all their hard-earned savings were swept away. Think of them, my dear boy, and give in; for no one gets the better of your father."

"My dear," said the alderman, "he is an ungrateful fellow; and of all faults, I consider ingratitude the worst. If it had not been for me, where would he be to-day? He would not be an Oxford honour-man, I'll answer for it. But as he is your son, my love, I'm willing to forgive him; and if he will give up playing the detective and writing mysterious letters, I will allow him a hundred a year, I will indeed!" As the alderman said this, he smiled so benignly that anyone, who had not seen him just before, might have thought, "What a good, amiable, generous man this is!"

Mrs. Thompson, who was hidden from her son by the portly body of her husband, urged Dick to accept his father's offer; but the young man was not deceived by the outward show of this perfect pattern of civic respectability, and he firmly declined, saying that he intended to pursue his inquiries, until he had fully established the innocence of his uncle.

"Very well, sir," said the alderman, "as you have business elsewhere, it would perhaps be as well if you

would deprive us of the benefit of your society."

"Good-bye, mother," Dick said, trying to pass his father.

"Now just you go along, or I'll have you put outside," the alderman said in a threatening tone, as he roughly pushed his son away.

"I am not as easily set aside as a will," Dick replied, determined not to leave his mother without kissing her.

The alderman was enraged by his son's words, and he tried to turn the young man out of the room; but Dick would not move until Mrs. Thompson asked him to go. Then he walked downstairs, followed by his father; and when they were both in the hall, the alderman told the footman that he was never to admit Dick again, if he did not wish to be discharged.

"I shall not trouble you again," Dick answered quietly, putting on his coat.

"Turn him out!" shouted the alderman, who could not brook this momentary delay.

The footman put his hand on Dick's shoulder; but the young man turned round and told the fellow to leave him alone.

"Put him out at once, or I'll discharge you," the alderman shouted; and the lackey tried to do what he was told. A struggle ensued; another manservant came to the assistance of the footman; and Mrs. Thompson, who had heard the noise, came downstairs. Then the alderman assisted the two men; and whilst Dick was being pushed towards the door, his umbrella touched the face of his mother, who had gone behind her son in order to speak to him.

Directly he knew that he had hurt her, he said how sorry he was, and kissed her; and he had left the house, when the alderman stopped him.

"Not so fast," said the auctioneer. "I'll teach you that you cannot strike your mother with impunity."

"I did not mean to hurt her," Dick answered.

"John," said the alderman to the footman, "go at once and fetch a policeman."

"You do not mean what you say, William?" his wife pleaded.

"I do, my love," he replied.

"This fellow shall suffer for his crime."

"Please, William," the poor wife urged, "let him go, and say no more about it. A little piece of sticking-plaster will make it all right."

"You may have a black eye, my darling," the alderman replied, "and I am not going to let the villain escape."

"He is not a villain, William; and if you had allowed me to see him alone, this would not have happened," the mother answered, finding courage to speak in defence of her only child



JOHN TREVOR.

The footman then returned with a policeman, and the alderman charged his son with assault.

Dick tried to comfort his mother, who said that she would never be happy again until this quarrel was at an end; and then Dick told the constable that he was ready to go to the police-station.

On their arrival Dick was formally charged, and then removed to a cell; but the sergeant did what he could to make his prisoner comfortable, and sent Dick a comfortable arm-chair in which to pass the night.

Whilst Dick was thinking how much more he would willingly suffer for Lily's sake, Mr. Alderman Thompson went up to town to consult Mr. Turner, the well-known solicitor who manages to appear in almost every criminal case of great public interest. The auctioneer gave his own account of what had taken place, and said that he did not want family matters, altogether unconnected with the assault, to be discussed, as he could not defend his brother's conduct; and he left the solicitor's office, quite pleased, when he had been informed that the magistrates would refuse to go into any extraneous matter.

The alderman then called upon Mr. Chandler, a worthy merchant and justice of the peace; and when he had said enough to bias this magistrate's judgment, he went to dine with his old friend and fellow-citizen, Mr. Joseph Cadbury, another magistrate for the liberty of Havering-atte-Bower. To this gentleman he complained bitterly of his son's conduct; and he said that if the young man did not soon become a reformed character, he would disinherit and disown Dick.

When the alderman returned home, Mrs. Thompson began at once to beg him to forgive Dick; but this request only excited his anger, and he roughly told his wife that she would have to appear in the morning to prosecute her son. This, at first, she refused to do; but, when the alderman threatened her, she gave way, and allowed him to place a large piece of black sticking-plaster over the little scratch.

Mr. Chandler and Mr. Cadbury were the two magistrates who sat the next morning to try Dick for assault, and Mr. Turner opened the case for the prosecutrix. He said that it was one of the worst cases which had come under his cognizance, though he had practised in the criminal courts for the last twenty years. Mrs. Thompson, he continued, was very loth to prosecute, but she was bound to do so, in order to obtain protection for the future.

"I will introduce," the solicitor said, "as

little extraneous matter as possible, but it is necessary for me to say that the prisoner has accused his father of the odious crime of bigamy, stating that Mr. Alderman Thompson was married in 1855 to one Mary Smith, a milliner. I have, however, obtained a certificate of the marriage of this Mary Smith, and it appears that Philip, and not William Thompson, the father of the prisoner, was the man who contracted a marriage with the milliner. I have also obtained a certificate of the death of the same Mary Smith, and as she died before the date of Philip Thompson's second marriage, that gentleman was legally married to the sister of the prosecutrix.

"The prisoner has also what he considers a grievance against his father, but I shall show you that this is not a legitimate one. Mr. Alderman Thompson and his brother married two sisters, and the only issue of the two marriages are the prisoner and his cousin, Miss Lily Thompson, who is now one of the chief ornaments of the Adelphi Theatre.

Philip Thompson, after the death of his second wife, was in poor circumstances; and the alderman, with his usual generosity, invited Miss Lily Thompson to stay with him permanently.

"The two young cousins unfortunately fell in love, and when the alderman and his wife objected to the union of persons who were doubly cousins, the prisoner became very violent. He left his comfortable home, and began to make inquiries, hoping to be able to show that our worthy alder-

man's life, before his marriage, was not without spot or blemish; but your honours will be glad to hear that from this ordeal the civic father has emerged white as driven snow.

"No one likes accusations to be made against them which they can have no opportunity of rebutting, and you will not be astonished to hear that the worthy alderman was annoyed. Then the prisoner went as far as to make these accusations to his mother, and you will scarcely be surprised to learn that the worthy alderman was angry. At any rate, he ordered the footman not to admit his son; and when the prisoner came down to Romford, he was told that his parents were 'not at home.' But the young man forced his way upstairs; he calmly requested his father to confess his crimes; and he refused to leave the house. The result was that he was put outside, and during the struggle which took place he struck his mother just under the eye, so that she was in great danger of losing her sight. We will be



THE CLERK WHOM THE ALDERMAN OFTEN EMPLOYED.

charitable, and say that it was done accidentally; but as the prisoner was doing what he had no right to do, this constitutes an assault."

John Trevor was then called. He stated: "I was told by Mr. Alderman Thompson not to admit the prisoner. When Mr. Richard Thompson came to the house, I said no one was at home; but the prisoner pushed by me and went upstairs. Afterwards I was told to put him out, and I helped to do so. The prisoner resisted, and the result was that Mrs. Thompson was struck by the umbrella which her son held in his hand. I also was hurt during the struggle."

On cross-examination, the witness admitted that the prisoner had his back turned towards his mother when he struck her.

Mrs. Thompson, who had not dared to remove the large piece of black sticking-plaster, was next sworn. She said, in answer to Mr. Turner, that she was struck by her son's umbrella; but she added that it was her fault more than his, because, whilst he was being pushed backwards, she went behind him in order to speak to him and to her husband. She stated that he had always been a kind and dutiful son to her, and that directly after the accident he had begged her pardon and received her forgiveness.

The magistrates' clerk now spoke to the gentlemen on the Bench, and then one of the magistrates asked Mr. Turner if, after the statement of his client, he proposed to go any further. The solicitor and the alderman both spoke to the poor woman for some time; but feeling safe in the presence of others, she shook her head, and refused to prosecute. Then Mr. Turner informed the magistrates that he proposed to abandon this charge of assault, but to go on with that preferred by John Trevor, the footman, who then repeated his evidence, and gave further particulars as to the slight injuries which he had suffered.

Dick, rising to open his defence, reminded the magistrates that the prosecutor, John Trevor, was ordered to put him out, and was the first to commence the struggle; and then, having made a short speech, he called his father as a witness.

Mr. Alderman Thompson said a few words to the solicitor, and then took the oath; but when Dick asked him if he had at any time known Mary Smith, a milliner, at Croydon, Mr. Turner objected to the question, saying that it was not relevant to the point whether the defendant had, or had not, assaulted John Trevor. The magistrates upheld the objection, and then Dick asked his father, "Did you try to prevent me saying good-bye to my mother?" But this question was also deemed irrelevant by the magistrates, and Dick

learned that he would be unable to obtain any information from his father.

Neither the solicitor for the prosecutor nor the defendant had anything more to say; and the magistrates retired with their clerk, who was a solicitor often employed by the alderman to collect rents and to evict the tenants of his small cottages. After an absence of about ten minutes the justices of the peace returned, and Mr. Chandler said they considered the assault proven, and fined the defendant five pounds and costs.

Dick then gave notice of appeal; but he was informed that the judgment of the magistrates could not be set aside by any higher tribunal.

Whilst the case was proceeding Mrs. Thompson had returned home, less afraid of the alderman than she had ever been before. She remembered that she owed duties to others as well as her husband, and these she resolved to perform; and she was determined that her son, whom she fondly loved, should not lead a life of misery and want. Her husband had often wronged her, and she had always submitted to his every wish and caprice; but at last he had demanded that she should wrong her son, and she had refused to obey him. She took off the large piece of sticking-plaster, which, though not connected in any way with the assault upon the footman, had influenced the judgment of the magistrates; and her honest nature and her maternal love rebelled against this odious deceit.

Little by little her love for her husband oozed away; but she thought of her own faults, and was then ready to forgive and to be forgiven. She resolved to lead a nobler life in future, and she was ready to be an affectionate and submissive wife, if William would deserve her affection, and employ love instead of force to compel submission. She made up her mind that if he struck her again she would leave him and go to her son; but in any case she would receive the income of her father's estate, to which she was personally entitled, and share it with Dick, and with her son's wife, if her boy chose to marry.

Her husband stayed away until it was late, and then returned, determined to wreak his vengeance upon the weak woman. But she walked up to him boldly, and rested a hand on his shoulder; and then, speaking to him of the need there was of turning over a new leaf of the book of life, she proposed that they should do this at once and together. The alderman forced an unpleasant laugh, and was about to strike his wife, but she told him that if he laid his hand upon her in the way of unkindness, she would seek the protection of her son in the morning. The words and look of determination alarmed the alderman, and for the first time in many years he did not allow himself the satisfaction of venturing his ill-humour upon the poor woman, whose



THE ALDERMAN'S WIFE.

greatest offence and misfortune was to be his wife.

CHAPTER XVII.

WANT AND WOE.

DICK THOMPSON was surprised and annoyed to find a sensational report of the proceedings before the Havering magistrates in the newspapers; and at first he was afraid to go to Lily. He lingered long on the way to her whom he loved with the heart-whole devotion of youth; but she welcomed him kindly, and neither blamed nor misjudged him. He required someone to guide and comfort him, now that he had suffered shame and disgrace; and once more her dear face smiled upon him, and her sweet voice spoke to him, and she sympathised with him in his sorrow.

Lily was very happy whilst her cousin remained with her; and she began to feel that she loved him more than she did her absent father, though she struggled hard to repress both her love for the youth and her knowledge of the fact. She wished to ignore love's influence, if she could not banish love altogether from her heart; but the little traitor would neither be driven into exile, nor allow his presence to remain unheeded.

The merry maiden banished gloom and sorrow when Dick came to visit her, and every day he paid her at least one short visit. At other times she was sad at heart, thinking of her father, all alone, weak, and weary of life; but when her cousin was by her side the little actress played the part of the queen of mirth.

Dick no longer entertained a high opinion of his own merits; and he spoke despondently about himself and mankind generally. He told Lily that he was altogether unworthy of her, and that he could never deserve the love of the best and purest creature in the world; and he said that he had no right to blame her for going upon the stage, as he was only one of Nature's failures.

The boarders where he lived looked at him askance, and he gave notice to leave; but his money was now almost exhausted, and he would accept nothing from Lily, because he was afraid that all his inquiries would be of no avail. He passed much of his time at the library of the British Museum, either writing a comedy which he had commenced at Oxford, or looking through the newspapers to see if he could find any further clue to assist him in proving his uncle's innocence. But his searches did not lead to any good result; and

when the notice which he had given to the proprietress expired, he had to pawn his watch to obtain the money to pay the bill. He had sent some short tales to the magazines, but some of these had been returned with thanks, and of the rest he had heard nothing.

He went away from Upper Bedford-place, and took a little attic bedroom in Guildford-street for three-and-sixpence a week; and then he gave notice of his change of address to the Bloomsbury post-office, hoping still—though somewhat despondent—that some of the editors to which he had forwarded short stories, would send him favourable replies. He felt that he was sinking in the world; and often, as he looked, without disdain, at some of the shabby-genteel readers in the British Museum reading-room, he wondered whether any one of them had once been a young gentleman of talent, unappreciated, like himself.

One day, when he went to visit Lily, she told him that a letter had been addressed to her father. Dick advised her to read it, and Lily reluctantly opened the envelope. This contained an angry letter from the woman who called herself Philip Thompson's wife, and it was signed Mary Smith. The writer accused Philip of deserting her, of leaving her to lead a life of misery and toil, and of abstaining from doing what he could to redeem the past. She repeated that she was ready to forgive him, and to go through the ceremony of marriage with him again, so that no one

would suspect him of having committed bigamy; but she demanded that he should make no more delay, as otherwise she would be forced to take proceedings against him, in spite of the natural love and affection of a wife.

From this letter Dick learned the woman's address, and he determined to see the nurse. He told Lily of his intention, and the girl thought that this would be a wise step to take, though she believed that the woman was an impostor; but Dick was surprised to find that Mary Smith was working for her living, and he now began to doubt the accuracy of the deduction which he had drawn from the facts formerly before him.

Dick went to the hospital, and saw the nurse; and the woman was very polite to him, and answered all his questions. She was quite certain that it was Philip Thompson whom she had married, and she knew that he was a poet, and she produced the certificate of marriage and some verses which Dick had seen before in a



DICK'S STORIES WERE REJECTED.

volume of his uncle's earlier poems. He was convinced that the nurse had been deceived and deserted by his uncle, but begged her not to take any proceedings against her husband, because the innocent would suffer for the guilty; and whilst he spoke the woman's eyes looked sadly at his, and she listened attentively to all he urged.

"I will think the matter over," she answered, "but I cannot promise you anything now; and you must remember that a deserted wife has to look after her own interest, as there is no one who cares for her."

She rose from her seat, and Dick went away without hope of success.

He returned on foot to his little attic in Bloomsbury, tired and hungry: he had taken nothing since his breakfast, and then only a little bread and butter and a cup of tea; and he had to pawn his watch-chain before he could buy something to eat.

He wrote to Mr. Paternoster, and asked the publisher's opinions about the short tales which that gentleman had seen; but the publisher had formed an unfavourable opinion of Dick, who, he thought, should not have attacked his father, and a clerk was ordered to write a curt answer to Dick's letter.

The young author had not expected an unfavourable reply; but still he did not even now lose all hope of succeeding in the literary arena. The newspapers complained that there were no comedy writers, and promised substantial rewards to anyone who could write a good original comedy. Dick fancied that he had been successful in doing this; and when he had given his manuscript the last finishing touch with the pen, he obtained permission to submit it to the lessees of the Haymarket Theatre, and then sent it to them in a registered envelope.

A month passed, and almost all Dick's wearing apparel was in pawn, and still he did not hear from the lessees of the theatre. Then he wrote to them, and they replied that his manuscript had been mislaid. He had gone without sufficient food, making a light breakfast, and taking only a brown roll and butter in the middle of the day at the British Museum refreshment-room; and every morning and every evening he had buoyed himself up with the hope that the good news would come by the next post.

He now applied for a classical mastership at the Commercial Travellers' School, which was vacant; and as there was no other first-class honour-man in competition with him, he expected to obtain the post. But his application was one of the first to be rejected; six other candidates were selected, as fitted for the position, and one of these was afterwards duly appointed.

Dick called to see the senior mathematical master, a college friend of his, who had taken a first-class in mathematics at Oxford; and this gentleman, who was Dick's senior by some years, deemed it his duty, as a clergyman of the Church of England, to lecture the young man on his past conduct. The reverend

gentleman said that a son who had tried to bring disgrace upon his own father, a most highly respected alderman of the City of London, could not expect to obtain a responsible position in such an institution as the Commercial Travellers' School. The master had occasionally borrowed money from Dick, when they were both at Oxford; and he spoke kindly and compassionately, though he severely censured Dick's conduct, and advised the young man to go at once and ask for his father's forgiveness.

This advice was not pleasant to Dick; but now, believing that he had been misled by his conviction that his uncle was innocent, he felt that it was the right course to pursue; and he thanked the friend who had spoken so plainly to him, and went to the office in the City, where the great firm of Thompson and Company transacted their business. Humbly and quietly he owned that he had done wrong, and asked for his father's forgiveness; but the alderman, who had noticed the hungry, careworn look of his son, replied at once, contemptuously, "You have returned because you could not make a livelihood, either honestly or otherwise. But I have disowned and disinherited you, and neither I nor your mother ever wish to see you again."

Dick then left the office and walked slowly westward, wondering what would become of him, now that he had nothing more that he could pawn. He went to the British Museum library, but he did not write; he was hungry and cold, and it was warm there; and he could sit and rest. At seven o'clock he had to leave, and then he wandered about the streets, thinking how he could honourably gain a few pence with which to allay the pain which warned him of his need of food.

He was proud still in his poverty, and he would not accept alms from his cousin. He



THE STAGE-MANAGER RETURNED DICK'S MANUSCRIPT.

believed that her father was guilty, and he did not think he had a right to go to her without telling her this; and he knew that such a statement would cause her much pain, without doing any good.

When the people were coming out of the theatres, he was near the door of the Princess's, and he saw two ladies trying to find a cab. He raised his hat, and asked if he might find one for them, and they gladly accepted his offer. He engaged a cab for them, and saw them safely in, and shut the door for them, hoping that they would give him something for his service; but they only thanked him. Dick sighed, when the cabman drove away; he was willing to work, but he could not beg for his reward.

He walked back to Bloomsbury, wishing he had a pipe of tobacco to deaden the pain, which was useless to him, as he could not satisfy his craving for food. With difficulty he mounted the stairs to his attic, and then he noticed the bill upon the chest of drawers, and remembered that on the morrow he would be homeless as well as penniless. He went to bed, but he could not sleep; and when he rose in the morning, he looked haggard and older.

He told the landlady that he could not pay his bill, and offered her his empty trunk; and as this was worth more than the sum he owed, she was glad to get rid of so poor a tenant upon such good terms. He passed the day at the British Museum, suffering much pain; and he was weak, giddy, and feverish. He could not read the book before his eyes; and when he had to leave the building, he could scarcely walk.

Still, he managed to reach the Haymarket Theatre; and he went in, to ask if the lessees had found his manuscript. The performance had not commenced, and the stage-manager saw Dick; and this gentleman said he had found the comedy, but as he did not know when he would have time to read the manuscript, he would return it at once.

Dick took the manuscript, and staggered away like one drunk. His last hope had failed him; and his head seemed on fire, his eyes could not see plainly, and his mouth was parched with thirst. At a fountain, that he passed, he obtained some water; and then for a little while he felt better.

Slowly he made his way back towards Bloomsbury; and he passed the British Museum, and walked along Montague-street to Russell-square, thinking of his comedy, which he believed was a good one. The fever had now increased; and he knew that he would be overtaken by death, if he did not at once find shelter and food. His limbs were stiff and weak; and he now endured cold and

hunger, and all the pangs of want and fever which the homeless poor must bear.

Incidents of the most trivial nature which had occurred in childhood, and remained forgotten until this time, suddenly returned to his memory; and then he thought of the work which his mind might still accomplish, if only he were not doomed to die in the streets for the want of a pennyworth of bread. He wandered on and on, thinking of what he might do in the future for the poor, whose sufferings he could now for the first time fairly estimate; and at last he determined to sacrifice his pride.

The house in Keppel-street, where Lily lived, was close by; and thither he went, ready to accept alms from the girl whom he loved. In his semi-conscious state, he doubted whether she, too, would not fail him in his hour of need,

as all others had; but he went on, nevertheless, and knocked at the door. A new servant answered, and refused to admit him; the girl thought that he was drunk; and she told him that Miss Thompson and Miss Treherne would not be back for at least another hour.

He walked a few steps away, but he soon returned to the house, and sat down close to the door. A strange numbness deprived his limbs of the power to move; faintness and a feeling of languor overcame him; he no longer shivered with cold or felt the pangs of hunger; and he only knew that sleep was stealing upon him, and that pain was gone. He had no desire to resist the soothing comforter; he sank down, and stretched himself out on the stones; and then he closed his weary eyes, and knew no more.

There he lay unconscious until, an hour later, a cab drove up to the house. A light rain was falling, and the night was dark. But Miss Treherne noticed Dick, and mistaking him for a drunken man, she warned her companion to keep away from the prostrate form. Lily, how-

ever, stooped down to see what was the matter with the unfortunate man, and she started back with a loud cry. She had recognised her cousin, and his face was so ghastly pale that she knew at once he was either ill or dead. She rang the bell vehemently, and then she took off her gloves and felt his forehead, and was glad to find that he was alive. The servant opened the door, and Lily and Miss Treherne carried the senseless form into the hall; and soon afterwards Mrs. Edwards helped them bear the unconscious body to the little sitting-room. Lily then attended to her cousin's comfort with all the skill and speed of her sex, and it was not long before Dick opened his eyes, and gazed at her in thankfulness.

"What was the matter with you, Dick?" she asked.



"NOT AT HOME, SIR."

He smiled a ghastly smile, and then replied: "I have had nothing to eat to-day, only a roll yesterday, and but little all the week."

Lily quickly brought him food, but the starving man had not now the strength to eat. He asked for a glass of warm milk, and this was given to him; after drinking it he became excited, and spoke of his failure and of his suspicions; and then for some time he lay still in a state of stupor.



CHAPTER XVIII.

IN BONDAGE.

SAMUEL SOPER was tired of business, and he wished to retire into the country to pass the rest of his days, in the happy possession of a rustic cottage, three acres, and a cow. He had come to the conclusion that he would prefer a fine woman as his companion; and one morning the little man made himself as spruce as any shopman in Regent-street, and then started off to gaze upon the charms of his ideal woman. This time he had to send up his card, for the nurse had not risen; but she sent him a message to say that she would not keep him waiting long; and when she had made her toilet, hastily though carefully, she came tripping down the stairs to greet her admirer.

Samuel Soper stated that she had the eyes of a gazelle, and paid her a few other compliments, equally delicate and original. He rattled on with his nonsense, until the nurse told him that Dick had called to see her; and then she wanted to know if it was true that Philip Thompson was poor, and if the will which she had witnessed, deprived him of all his father's money.

"Of course," said Samuel Soper, speaking in a very low tone, "between ourselves, we know that the will was a forgery."

The hospital nurse looked at him in astonishment; but the little man supposed that she did not care to hear him speak so plainly.

"Look here," he continued, "the cards have been shuffled since I saw you last; and I know a game worth two of that you're playing. You needn't turn away your head, for my plans are as sound as the most matrimonial mother could desire; and before you're many hours older, you will own that Samuel Soper is the best architect for the building-up of your fortune."

Mary Smith smiled sweetly upon the little man, and he proposed a day's outing to her; and she, being anxious to obtain as much information as she could, accepted his invitation.

Samuel Soper was usually a stingy man; but on this great occasion of his life he took a hansom to Waterloo Station, and gave the

driver two shillings, which was sixpence more than the man's legal fare; and he bought first-class tickets to Richmond, and gave a shilling to the guard for locking the carriage door. In the gondola of the London streets, the little man had enjoyed the felicity of holding his charmer's hand; and when the train started, he began to address her.

"My dear madam," he said, "I have fallen in love." As he spoke, he looked at her sheepishly; for this swaggering slayer of hearts was still a little afraid of the massive object of his affections.

"If you fall in love you will find yourself in sorrow," she replied.

"If that is so," he replied, smiling, "I have only to marry to fall out again."

"If you marry," she continued in a light strain, "you will certainly fall out with a woman, but you cannot escape from misfortune."

"She will then be no longer Miss," Samuel Soper observed; "and no one thinks ill of Fortune."

"The jade has done nothing for me," Miss Smith replied.

"Ah!" exclaimed Samuel Soper, "but she will," and the little man pressed the hand of his massive companion to his lips.

"Sir!" the lady exclaimed indignantly.

"My dear Miss Smith," Samuel Soper continued, "people say that I'm open; and in getting to the seat of my affections without encountering any obstacles, you must have found me very much so. I hate reserve, and I should like to know what is the use of it, when the enemy has taken up her position right in the centre of one's anatomy. You have fired your eyes at me, and I'm so riddled with the shot that you can look clean through me. I can't hold out any longer, and so, without more ado, I ask you to accept my unconditional surrender. From this time forth, I am yours truly; and if you will only cling to me, as some partners will to a bottled ace of trumps, Samuel Soper will be content."

"You seem to forget, sir, that I am a married woman," the lady said severely.

"Why, my dear madam," he replied, "you



THERE DICK LAY UNCONSCIOUS.

have already hinted that you consider the married state a marred one."

"Matrimony has certainly done very little for me," she said, sighing.

"That is all the more reason why Fortune and Hymen should have all their sweets in store for you. You can't eat your cake and have it too, you know," the little man observed.

"Though I have been unfortunate," she replied, "I can fully understand that, where there is mutual affection and a sympathetic feeling, no state of society can be more satisfactory than that of marriage. But I thought," she continued, "you brought me here to tell me something more important than this."

"There can be nothing more important to a poor bleeding heart than a piece of sticking-plaster to stop up its gaping wound; and for such a purpose I will employ you," Samuel Soper replied.

The nurse's answer to this generous offer was lost, as the train was entering Richmond Station; and the sudden application of the brake made the little man lose his balance, and threw him into the arms of his charmer. No damage, however, was caused by this collision; and the holiday-makers walked to the river-side, and there Samuel Soper hired a boat. He rowed a little while, but soon he became tired of this unwonted exercise.

"It's no use your playing a game against Philip Thompson," the little man said, when they were going down with the tide. "He's been as poor as a chapel mouse, ever since that forged will knocked all his fortune into an empty cocked hat. Neither of us could upset that will now; but, acting together, we could attack the alderman, and make him come to terms. Now you're a fine woman, and I'm a little man; and if we were rolled into one by the Church, we should make a very good couple."

"You seem to forget that I'm the wife of Philip Thompson," Mary Smith replied, smiling sweetly upon her admirer.

Samuel Soper laughed, and then said:

"How you could ever have mistaken the one brother for the other, I'm blown if I can comprehend; but as sure as I'm sitting here, who was a witness to the marriage, it was the alderman with whom you mated."

The woman looked astonished; but she did not speak, as she wanted to learn as much as she could before she committed herself. Samuel Soper, however, now that he had broken the ice, was quite willing to plunge into the troubled waters.

"Now, as he has a wife living, he could not marry you again; so I propose that we enter into a league and covenant to get as much out of him as we can. That marriage of yours has been the making of me; it got me into the house of Thompson and Co.; it enabled me to become a partner in the firm; and now I propose to share my savings and myself with you. All you have to do, will be to marry me under a false name, so as not to commit bigamy; and when we have had the blessing of the Church, we'll get our straw from the alder-

man, make ourselves a snug little nest, and live together as happy as two turtle doves."

"You are a dear little man, certainly," the nurse replied. "But how do I know that you will not get tired of me, and desert me after a time? Man is a fickle creature."

"Samuel Soper is not a mean cad, by any manner of means," the little fellow replied. "How any person with the sense of a man could go away from such a fine figure-head of a woman as you, I'm at a loss to understand. But I'll tell you what I'll do; and if you don't say done, either you're not the noble creature I take you for, or else I'm a double Dutchman. I have ten thousand pounds of my own, and of that I'll give you five thousand. You shall have it in Consols, and I'll put it in your name, so that no one can touch it."

"I must have proof that it is there, and I must be quite certain that you cannot draw it out again, you dear little lover," he answered.

Samuel Soper did not altogether approve of this business-like shrewdness, and even a "dear little lover" did not quite take the harsh sound of the other words out of his ears; but he comforted himself with the reflection that, when she was his wife, she would look after his interests, whilst until then she was naturally bound to look after her own.

"You shall go with me to a stockbroker one day next week, and he shall buy the stock for you. I will pay for them, and you shall see them transferred to your name; and then I will go at once and have the banns put up under a false name."

To this arrangement Samuel Soper's charmer agreed; and she told him that she would be married under the name of Mary Morrison. Directly she had given her consent, the little man longed to throw his small arms around his massive Venus. In his ecstatic rapture, he was unmindful of other cockneys, likewise engaged in aquatic pursuits; and he was heedless of the danger to the little craft he steered. But though his goddess did not mind Samuel Soper calling her his little duck, she had a strong objection to taking to the water; and she bade the little man control his emotion, until they were alone in a place where the ebullition of their hearts would be fraught with less danger to their persons.

As a reward for his prompt obedience, she gave him her hand to kiss; but her lover was not content with the honour of pressing his mouth against her glove. He wanted to steal a kiss from her broad ruddy lips, to throw his arms around her massive form, and to feel that she was all his; and as his desires could not be accomplished whilst they floated upon the dangerous element which is fatal to so many cockney lovers, he took the sculls and rowed to the bank, and then engaged a man to tow the boat against the tide.

They returned safely to Richmond, and then Samuel Soper proposed that they should go and dine at the Star and Garter; but the hospital nurse had read in novels that actresses, countesses, and other improper persons, frequented that famous hostelry; and she insisted

upon dining in a respectable, but not very tempting cookshop. Here they discovered some original maids of honour, and found them very nice and palatable; and Samuel Soper said some sweet things, whilst his Venus devoured tarts that were still sweeter.

The nurse allowed Samuel a second glass of wine, but she would not permit him to order a third, though he pleaded that he only wanted it in order to drink her health. She told him that, with all her long experience in a hospital, she had never known anybody cured of disease by wine or medicine taken by another, and that she had seen many persons laid up through drinking too much liquor to the health of their friends, and to the detriment of their own.

When they arrived at the station the little man was very thirsty, and he would have been glad of a glass of shandygaff; but his charmer had her eyes upon him, and he could not go to the refreshment room for this beverage of the oarsman, without failing in that courtesy which the chivalrous Samuel Soper considered due to the charming sex. Still, he again managed to secure an empty carriage; and directly the train moved out of the station, the little man pressed his lips against the ample mouth of his amorous fair, and extracted therefrom as much nectar as he could glean.

It is true that he could not satisfy his thirst, but that may have been excessive; for he complained that his heart was an active volcano, from which tons of fiery love were issuing forth. Mary now kissed the little man for the first time; and his bliss was so great that he at once said he would make the necessary arrangements on the morrow to enable him to buy the five thousand pounds' worth of Consols on the day after. He said, too, that the banns should be published on Sunday, and that they would be married on the following Monday fortnight.

He told her not to be surprised if he died of heart disease before the bridal day dawned, and he assured her that men, afflicted with an internal volcano, were liable to go off at any moment.

Therefore, Mary Smith modestly hinted that, for a pecuniary consideration, the Archbishop of Canterbury was willing to come to the assistance of impatient lovers; but the little man said there were difficulties in the way of a special license, as he had an objection to unnecessary affidavits. Then she bade him do his best to keep himself alive for her sake, if he valued her love; and he promised to be very careful, though he expressed his doubts as to the result.

The next morning, Samuel Soper went to the Guildhall library to refer to some law books; and he was not sorry to find that, though a marriage celebrated without due publication of banns is illegal, it is still bigamy, if one of the parties is already bound in wedlock at the time of the celebration.

He did not propose, under any circumstances, to prosecute his charmer; but if his wife did not do exactly as he wished, he would dissolve the marriage and recover the five thousand pounds, given

in consideration of matrimony. Love was not an overwhelming passion in the little man's breast, and he could consider his chances of connubial bliss as carefully as he could calculate the odds against an outsider for the Derby; but her form was perfect, and the result of his contemplation was favourable to the massive creature, entered for the matrimonial stakes.

The cunning fellow, longing to salute the woman of his choice as his bride, met her, as he had promised, upon the day appointed. He went with her to a stockbroker, whose name she chose at random in the directory, at the last moment, in order to avoid all chance of collusion between him and her little admirer; and the stock was purchased, and duly



"MY HEART IS AN ACTIVE VOLCANO, SENDING OUT TONS OF FIERY LOVE."

transferred to her at the Bank of England. Then the banns of marriage were published at the Islington parish church; and a fortnight later she was quite ready for the little man, when he called to take her to church. There she gave her name as Mary Morrison, and stated that her deceased father was Edward Morrison, a stationer and newspaper vendor; and without any unnecessary delay, Mary Morrison and Samuel Soper were united in holy matrimony.

The bride and bridegroom had agreed to dine at the Star and Garter; for, now that she was married, the lady had no objection to be seen at that famous hotel.

At the hotel Samuel Soper ordered dinner for himself and his bride, and then they took a stroll in the park. The little man was pleased to see that people looked with admiration at the fine creature whom he had made his wife. Like most selfish men, he was proud of possessing anything which others desired, but could not obtain; and he valued the large diamond in the ring on his finger, not because it was beautiful, but because it was costly, and few persons could afford to buy so precious a gem.

The bridegroom would have been glad to remain in the most frequented walks; but the bride modestly sought retirement, as she wanted to talk over some serious matters with her husband. Hers was the stronger will, and the little man had to obey; but he did not yield until he could no longer resist without being rude to the woman he had so lately taken for better or worse.

"Samuel," she said, when they were alone, "you will not be angry with me, I hope, if I confess that I have deceived you."

"Samuel Soper is too sharp and sly to be deceived, my love," he replied.

"I have deceived you for all that," she said, smiling pleasantly. "You think I am Alderman Thompson's legal wife, but I am not."

"Then who are you?" he asked angrily.

"I am your wife now," she answered, patting him on the cheeks with her gloved hands, in a vain attempt to drive away his frowns. "But this morning I was simply Mary Morrison, spinster."

"You don't mean what you say," he retorted, glaring at her with his little eyes.

"Yes, I do," she said; "and now that you are my husband, I think it right to confess all. Mary Smith died twenty-five years ago; and, before she committed suicide, she gave me an introduction to the hospital, which she had received from her husband's father. I tried to persuade her not to do anything rash, and I advised her to force her husband to make her an allowance; but she loved the brute, and because he would not return the affection which she felt for him, she was determined to set him free. I ought to have had her arrested; but I was a wicked woman, and as I wanted the letter of introduction to the matron, I let her go to her destruction."

"Madam," the little man hissed through his teeth, "you have taken me in; and if you were not my wife, and consequently a lady, I should call you a swindler."

"You may call me a harder name than that, if you like, Samuel," she replied. "I have often blamed myself for the murder of Mary Thompson, and I know that I am nearly as guilty as if I had killed her."

"What is that to me!" he cried. "What I complain of is this, that I've been done, in spite of my confounded sharpness and slyness. I should not mind if you had committed a hundred murders, if I could only have you hanged. Here am I, bound to you for life; and my five thousand pounds are gone, clean as a whistle; and I never bargained for such a state of affairs, I can tell you."

"I thought you loved me a little," she said, sighing.

"So I did," he replied sternly. "If you had been married to someone else, we should have hit it off all right, I daresay; but a man with a wife of his own is like a cat with a brick tied round its neck, for neither of them can easily climb up in the world."

"I thought that as neither you nor I had lived good lives in the past, we might turn over a new leaf, and try to be better together," she urged.

"If I had married Lily, with her reversion to forty thousand pounds, I should have been ready to hear about a better life and to be bothered with the parson; but I did not expect these encumbrances with you, after all your little goings-on. You are a nice one to talk of a better life, you are!" he exclaimed.

"I wanted to punish Philip Thompson for ill-treating poor Mary Thompson, who I thought was his wife. I knew that her husband had beaten her, and had then deserted her in the time of her need. I blamed myself for her death, and I wished to punish the real offender; but then the devil tempted me, and made me think how pleasant it would be to have silks and satins, and to be able to do just what I liked, with no one to blame me."

"When you women do anything good, you take the praise, and call it an act of charity; but when you do what you shouldn't, you all put it down to the poor devil," Samuel Soper answered in his wrath.

"That is true," she replied humbly. "I am not a good woman, and I never was; but I will go to Miss Thompson, and confess all."

"And be prosecuted for your trouble, you blooming fool, you!" the little man exclaimed.

"You are angry with me, because I am not someone else's wife," she said. "You do not mind my not being a good woman; it's not that which makes you angry with me!"

"I never said it was, did I, you snivelling idiot?" Samuel Soper asked disdainfully.

"Mr. Soper," she said, "we had better part. I can go back to the hospital; for I said nothing about this marriage, as I feared you would not marry me in the end."

"And my five thousand pounds?" Samuel Soper asked, looking at her eagerly. If she would have given him back his money, he would not have cared much.

"I shall not touch either the capital or the interest, as long as you do not interfere with me," she answered. "If I were to lose my place, I should have to go to the bank and prove my identity; but if I were to do this now, it would soon be known at the hospital that I gave the authorities a false name when I entered as a probationer."

"You are a thief!" he cried.

"I cannot give you back the money," she said calmly. "If I did, and I were afterwards discharged from the hospital, I could not honestly earn my livelihood."

"What do I care whether you make your living honestly or not! I want my money!" he exclaimed, looking at her angrily, and trying to frighten her.

"Let us have no more of this," she said. "On your own confession, you are a forger; and if you attack me, I can retaliate. As it is, I intend to tell Philip Thompson's daughter all I know; but, as you are my husband, I shall make her promise that you shall not be prosecuted."

"Look here, Mary," he said quietly, and in a pleasant tone as he could command, "if you go and confess, you are certain to be turned out of the hospital, whilst the jury will believe the alderman's oath and mine, against yours, any day. Why, you could not stand cross-examination two minutes, with your antecedents."

"If you are wise," she replied, "you will tell the truth and save yourself; for if you go into the witness-box for that wretch, even I would not save you."

"And you will, if I don't?" he said, with some hesitation.

"Yes," she answered.

"You will ruin yourself, if you tell Lily Thompson," he said, slowly. "You will certainly be expelled from the hospital."

"In that case I shall nurse the poor, and I will distribute amongst them the interest of the money with which you proposed to purchase me body and soul," she replied. "You would never have used this fund so well, had it remained yours; and I shall be doing good in that way, and be working out my repentance before the world which knows of my past guilt."

"Cannot I persuade you?" he asked, trying to feign some love for her.

"No," she answered.

"Your partner has made me the guilty woman that I am, and the time has come for him to suffer for his sins."

"Well," he said, "at least a wife will see that her husband is safe."

"Yes, if you will confess," she replied.

"I will turn Queen's evidence, if they will give me a chance," he answered.

"Very well," she said. "Good-bye."

He wanted to kiss her, but she did not wish for any token of his feigned love. She knew that she was a guilty woman, but he also had sinned, and he would not repent.

So they parted on their wedding-day, and each thought ill of that other whom each had taken to love and cherish through good and ill, until death should them part.

Mary Smith returned to town from Richmond, but Samuel Soper walked across the park, and took the train from Twickenham. He did not return to the hotel, for he had not given his address, and he knew that he would have had little satisfaction in



"SAMUEL SOPER IS TOO SHARP AND SLY TO BE DECEIVED, MY LOVE."

eating a good dinner alone, and less still when he saw the bill, and had to pay for two.

CHAPTER XIX.

A CONFESSION.

SAMUEL SOPER did not consider that he had acted with his usual sagacity in his matrimonial venture; and he thought that by flattery and cajolery he might have obtained the money invested in Consols, if he had not quarrelled with his wife so soon. In his own selfish way, moreover, he was fond of the fine woman whom he had married; and he made up his mind to captivate her affections again at the first opportunity. But as he might be called upon at any moment to give evidence against the alderman, he deemed it advisable to make his next campaign against his partner's pocket; and he entered the alderman's private room, on the day after his wedding, with the intention of getting as much money as he could, with as little delay as possible.

"I am tired of business cares and worries," he said immediately, knowing that it was of no use to take a zigzag course with his senior partner. "I want to revel in rural delights at Richmond, or some other of our country retreats, where a man can enjoy himself all the year long."

"Oh, you do, do you?" the alderman observed, without looking up from the account-book, in which he pretended to be interested.

"Yes," Samuel Soper answered in a determined tone, "and I want to capitalise my interest in the business."

"I think it was arranged that I could dissolve partnership at any time, without giving you any compensation. Do you remember?" the alderman asked, looking up at the little man.

"I only let you put that in the deed because I knew that you would never dare to exercise your right; and now I want twenty thousand down, and there's an end of the matter," said Samuel Soper.

"If that's an end of the matter, I am quite contented. You have got no money out of me, and you are not likely to do so in that way; but if it pleases you to imagine that you have been paid, all well and good," the alderman replied.

"Samuel Soper won't stand no humbug; and when I say the will was a forgery, and Mary Smith claims you as her husband, where will you be then, I should like to know!" the little man exclaimed.

"In that case I should be forced to make myself disagreeable, and to indict you both for conspiracy," the alderman answered.

"Don't you try on that little game, or you'll repent it, I can tell you," Samuel Soper said angrily.

"Strange, wasn't it," the little man continued, "that I should be the only witness to the will that you could find? Very strange indeed! But when I tell a jury at the Central

Criminal that there never was another, it won't seem so. As to your taking me into partnership, that was strange, too. I came to the office one day, soon after your marriage. I reminded you that I was a witness to the ceremony, and wanted a place. You told me to hold my tongue, and took me on as porter, though a blind man could have seen, with half an eye, that I wasn't fit for the work. Then there was the will affair; and directly after the forgery had turned out a success, you took me into partnership, though I certainly wasn't a very desirable partner. I had no nearer acquaintance with the art of writing and spelling than I had with the man in the moon. I studied a little when I was a partner in the great house of Thompson and Co.; but private lessons ain't done much for me, except in the matter of heathen mythology, to which I took a liking because the gods and goddesses went the pace that the mashers try to keep up nowadays. Still, I can't tot up a column of figures; and it's not very often that a porter jumps out of his own shoes into those of a partner, without having to come to the ground between whiles, either to act as a clerk, or to marry the guv'nor's daughter, like Dick Whittington and his cat. That was a good long jump of mine! beats the record, you bet!"

"Thank you," the alderman replied, "I am a respectable citizen of the City of London, and don't bet."

"Well, you may fork out twenty thousand, anyhow," Samuel Soper answered.

"Mr. Soper," said the alderman severely, "your language has a little touch of what, without great injustice to you, I might perhaps call slang. Please, do not let me hear any more of it, for such expressions grate upon my ears. I cannot bear anything horsey or fast in tone."

"Then just you throw up the sponge and hand over the stakes, or I'll give you a chance of preaching a sermon on style to the chaplain at Newgate," the little man threatened.

"My dear young friend, let us speak plainly, for lying is a deadly sin; and, between ourselves, there is no object to be gained in giving points to the devil. Now, what I want to tell you, in as pleasant a way as possible, is that if John Doe forges a legal document, and Richard Roe is a witness to that instrument, knowing that it has been forged, Richard Roe is likely to suffer for his wrong-doing as much as John Doe. If we take an extreme case, in which John Doe was actuated by the highest motives, when he committed forgery—for instance, if he wanted to prop up an honourable house, highly thought of in the City—whilst Richard Roe, who tempted John Doe to commit the crime, had only base and sordid motives for what he did: a merciful judge might deal leniently with the poor man who listened to the voice of the tempter, and bring down the sword of justice upon the head of the man who led a good Christian into the way of iniquity. I put my trust in a higher power, Samuel Soper, than those of this world; and when I consider

how much I have given away in charity, and what good I have done with the talents entrusted to me, I feel that there is a power upon which I may firmly rely."

The alderman looked upwards, as if heaven were visible on the office ceiling, and a benignant smile crept stealthily across his unctuous cheeks, whilst the whites of his eyes were to the fore; and this fact, coupled with the great man's holy appearance, would have convinced anyone, less suspicious than Samuel Soper, that a worthy soul was looking inwards and learning to know itself.

But the little man paid no reverence to things that were sacred, and showed no respect to persons lost in holy meditation. Hastily, and we might almost venture to say vulgarly, he tapped two fingers of his right hand against his nose; and then, in a most unseemly manner, he summoned the eyes that were inwardly inclined, by giving their owner a nudge in that part where the waist should have been.

"Come," he said, "I want twenty thousand pounds."

"So do I," replied the sanctimonious man of business. "This morning I received a circular, which

informs me that the Church is in danger from the combined attacks of Radicals and Atheists; and it will be my duty as a man, and, I may say, as an alderman, to give my money, if not my blood, in defence of that noble institution, by law established."

"You'll soon be in another glorious institution, by law established for the picking of oakum, if you don't look out, you blessed hypocrite, you!"

"There's not a person of importance in the City of London who doesn't know me as a man

of sterling merit; and no subscription-list is complete without the name of Alderman Thompson."

"You always do your alms before men to be seen of them," Samuel Soper said, scornfully.

"It's a lie, sir, a damnable lie!" the alderman exclaimed in righteous indignation. "The devil, it has been said by one of our eminent divines, can quote from Holy Writ; and I may add, to refute your calumny, 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works.'"

"Well, what does the Church and all these blessed charities matter to you, who never get anything out of them?" Samuel Soper asked.

"The praise of godly men is sweet to the righteous, and when his enemies rise up against him, and the wicked strive to bring him to destruction, he may even find safety and refuge amongst them," the great man replied.

"A poor refuge they'll be, if I turn Queen's evidence. Why, you'd be safer in Spain, amongst the Catholics, for there's no extradition treaty."

"I could not live amongst people who sin on Satur-

day night and buy absolution on Sunday morning," the alderman replied. "Here, in the City, it has sometimes been my fate to herd with thieves; but I am glad to say that they have almost all been orthodox Christians."

"Mary Smith and I have come to an arrangement," Samuel Soper said abruptly. "We are both going to sail under the same colours, and if you won't engage us, we will see whether your brother won't take us up."



THE ALDERMAN WROTE A CHEQUE FOR ONE THOUSAND POUNDS.

"My dear friend," said the alderman, "I should soon be a sinking vessel were I to do as you propose. If I were to spend my golden force in pumping out your iniquitous testimony, you would be back again immediately; and every time I expended my power in expelling you, I should become weaker, whilst you would grow stronger. But I don't want you here in the office; and you may tear up the partnership deed, and leave me alone to float on the waters of commerce. You're like Jonah; and, I can assure you, it would be credited to your account hereafter, if you would consent to go overboard. But I know that you are a sinner, and that you do not think enough of the storm of wrath to come; so if you will allow me to steer my course without the burthen of your ungodly presence, I will give you a thousand pounds a year as an insurance premium."

Samuel Soper did his best to induce the alderman to pay him a large capital sum; but the auctioneer would not be persuaded, and the little man had to content himself with what was offered him.

"You must settle it upon me, so that you can't draw back; and you must make it payable yearly in advance," he said at last.

"Yes, I don't mind that," the alderman replied.

"All right!" Samuel Soper exclaimed. "I'll take the first thousand at once, if you don't mind."

The alderman took out his cheque-book, and wrote a cheque for one thousand pounds. He did this slowly and deliberately, glancing every now and then at Samuel Soper, and at a paper in the little man's handwriting; and when he had passed the cheque to his former partner, he smiled benignly, as if he wanted it to be understood that he at any rate could forgive his enemies, and love his neighbour as himself.

"You had better stay here a little while, and pack up anything that belongs to you; and it would not be amiss if you could let the clerks understand that we have quarrelled, and that you are not coming back here any more," the alderman observed in his mellifluous tone of voice.

"Right you are, old man," Samuel Soper replied. "You will have the deed drawn up, and sent to me as soon as it is ready."

"Certainly," replied the auctioneer. "The consideration must be your agreement not to set up in business to oppose me."

"That's the ticket; and if ever you want anybody to give evidence as to your character, you'll only have to come to my shop," the little man answered. Then he gave a broad grin, complimented his companion on being cunning, and winked his eye to express his admiration.

With a benignant smile on his face the alderman opened the door, and then beginning to speak in a loud tone, he said: "Now you will be good enough to make haste, Mr. Soper. I have been the making of you, and this is the way you show your gratitude; but I won't stand any more of your nonsense, so there now!"

"Right you are, old man," Samuel Soper answered, loud enough now for the clerks to hear, as the auctioneer was leaving his private office.

The alderman went to his solicitor, Mr. John Jones, of Jones and Doem, and requested that gentleman to give notice to the *Gazette* of the dissolution of partnership between himself and Samuel Soper, and to take any other steps that might be necessary. Whilst the auctioneer was giving these instructions to his lawyer, he assumed a look of injured innocence which made Mr. Jones wonder what offence the little man could have committed.

"Would you believe it, Mr. Jones?" the alderman said at last, as if he could no longer restrain his wrath, "I have been the making of that man, and yet he came to me this morning and said that he wanted twenty thousand pounds. I refused to give him a halfpenny, and then he threatened to swear that my father's will, which he witnessed, was a forgery, and that I, and not my brother, was the man who married Mary Smith. He told me that he had come to an arrangement with this woman; but I gave him fair notice that if they trouble me, I will indict the pair of them for conspiracy," the alderman said, perspiring and wrathful.

"You could not have done better, even with our advice," the solicitor replied.

"When I was young, I made him a partner, because I thought that wit was the best thing to go down with the hammer," the alderman continued, rising as his indignation seemed to overpower him.

"If he troubles you again come to me, and we shall know how to deal with the gentleman," the solicitor said.

"I told him to pack up and be off; but if he comes back, or threatens me again, I'll send for you."

When the alderman returned to Bucklersbury, he found that Samuel Soper had left the office; and he noticed his cheque-book on the table. He looked at it, and then called one of the clerks, and told him that he missed one of his blank cheques. It was gone, he said, and no entry had been made on the counterfoil.

The young man assured the alderman that no one, except Mr. Soper, had been in the room since luncheon-time; and the alderman then went to the Metropolitan and County Bank, where he kept his account. The alderman was a director of the bank, and he immediately told one of the cashiers that a blank cheque had been extracted from his cheque-book without his knowledge or consent.

"Mr. Soper brought a cheque for a thousand pounds a little while ago, but I suppose that is all right," the clerk replied.

"I should like to see that cheque," the alderman said drily.

The bank official looked at it carefully himself, and then handed it to the director.

"I hope it is all right," the young man said. "I noticed that the signature was not much like your usual one, but I knew Mr. Soper, and I cashed it."

The alderman looked at the cheque, and then said he would take it to the manager.

"This is a forgery, and a clumsy one too, Mr. Robinson," the alderman said, when he had entered the manager's room.

"Indeed! I am sorry to hear it," the manager replied; and then, having glanced at the signature, he continued, "It would not have deceived me. But do you know who presented it?"

"Mr. Soper," the alderman replied.

"Your partner?" said the manager.

"He was my partner until this morning," the alderman answered; and then he explained why he had dissolved partnership with the little man, in words very similar to those which he had employed in giving his account of the matter to the solicitor.

The manager touched the bell, and sent for the cashier who had paid the money; and when this young gentleman was asked why he had been misled by so poor a forgery, he answered that, as he knew Mr. Soper by sight he thought, it was all right, though he did notice that the signature was not written with the alderman's usual distinctness and boldness.

"You see that h," the alderman said; "I knew at once that the letter was not mine; and then compare this loop with the one I make. Mine is always well rounded; but here the forger, unaccustomed to making such loops, has stopped every now and then to see how his pen should go; and whilst I never lift my pen in making it, he seems to have done so more than once."

"It is a very clumsy forgery, and the cheque ought never to have been cashed," the manager said, looking severely at the cashier who had paid the money.

"No," said the alderman, interpreting that look. "Considering that this gentleman knew that Mr. Soper was my partner, he is not much to blame; and this will teach him to be more careful in the future. I was wrong to leave my cheque-book about, and of course I shall bear the loss; that is," the alderman added, "if we cannot capture Mr. Samuel Soper with the money."

"Take the number of the notes, and stop them at the Bank of England at once," the manager said to the cashier.

"And after you have done that you might call and tell Mr. Jones, my solicitor, of 7, Philpot-lane, that I want to see him here at once with reference to Mr. Soper," the alderman said.

The cashier learned at the bank that one of the notes for a hundred pounds had been exchanged for gold; and when the alderman and his solicitor went to Samuel Soper's lodgings,

they were informed that he had gone away for some time, and had left no address. A warrant was then issued for his arrest; and the alderman congratulated himself upon having his most dangerous adversary in his power at last.

Meanwhile the little man had been congratulating himself upon being so sharp and sly as even to get the better of the alderman. But Samuel Soper was not quite at his ease. He felt certain that his wife would go to Lily, confess the fraud which she had committed, and speak of the forgery; but the little man was not quite so sure that she would be able to obtain an immunity from arrest for her husband. It occurred to him that a month's trip to Spain would afford him a pleasant excursion, and a safe refuge from the police, if necessary; so he made his arrangements, and took one of Cook's second-class tickets for a tour in Spain.

At about the same time, Mrs. Soper called to see Lily; and she found the pretty maiden with her cousin, who was much better. Dick had told Lily that

he had lost all hope of proving her father's innocence; and though he had not repeated all the hospital nurse had said to him, the little maiden had heard enough to make her very sad at heart.

When Mrs. Soper was shown into the room, Dick looked up at the woman angrily; and he forbade her to tell his cousin any of the details of the wrongs which she had suffered.

"I did not come to do that," Mrs. Soper humbly replied. "I deceived you when you saw me at the hospital, and I have come to confess the truth."

Philip Thompson never married Mary Smith; and when I claimed him as my husband, I did so with mercenary motives, and for the purpose of obtaining revenge for a wrong which I thought he had done me."

"My father was not guilty of bigamy," Lily said joyfully.

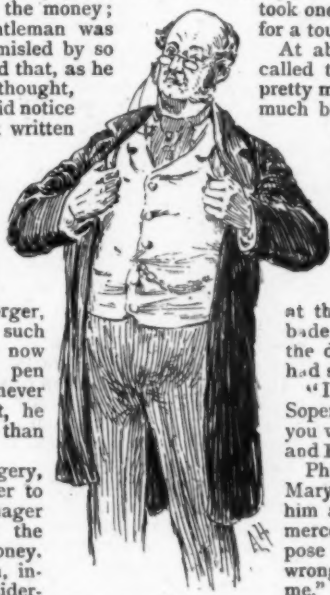
"No, he was not guilty, and I will prove this; but before I tell you any more I must make you both promise that you will neither prosecute my husband, nor allow anything I say now to be used against him by others," the nurse said.

"Your earnestness imposed upon me before, and how are we to know that you are not misleading us now?" Dick asked.

"I can have nothing to gain by owning that I have done wrong; and I do not ask for immunity for myself, but only for my husband," the woman pleaded.

"I will promise you what you ask," Lily said, "and if you prove my father's innocence I shall be very grateful to you."

"Mary Smith and I were apprentices in a millinery and underclothing shop at Croydon,



"YOU COULD NOT HAVE DONE BETTER, EVEN WITH OUR ADVICE."

when Alderman Thompson was a cadet at Addiscombe," the nurse began. "I knew him, and he told me his name was Philip Robinson, but I learned afterwards that his surname was Thompson.

"Before this, however, I had been sent away from the shop in disgrace. Mrs. Adams, who kept it, used to take a number of apprentices, getting a small premium with each; and when work was slack, she was only too glad of an excuse to get rid of any of us. Whilst there was plenty of plain sewing to be done, she made us work hard; but when she had no contract to complete, instead of teaching us millinery, as she'd agreed to do, she let us run about the streets as we liked, as long as we got back by eleven. The cadet Thompson—for I may as well give him his real name—spoke to me one day, and soon afterwards vowed that he loved me more than he loved his life; and yet one night he deliberately misled me as to the hour, and I was locked out. I spent the night walking about out of doors, and the next morning I was dismissed in disgrace.

"I wrote to my aunt, who had apprenticed me to Mrs. Adams; but she had paid the premium to get rid of me, having two daughters of her own, and only a small business in the green-grocery line; and my cousins, who were as ugly as sin, preferred to do all the work rather than have me with them, because they thought that they would never get married as long as I remained in the house. I only got a letter from one of them, and was told that as I'd made my bed, so I should have to lie on it.

"I took a cheap room in a low part of Croydon, and wrote a letter to the cadet; but I had not written to him by his right name, and my note came back. I pawned things to pay my way, and waited about the streets, hoping to see him; and I did see him at last, but not alone. He was with Mary Smith, and he turned away to avoid me; and when I caught him alone the same evening, on his way back to college, he let me understand that he also would have nothing more to do with me. Oh! what fools we women are, not to know that all men are villains!"

Lily pressed Dick's hand to express a different opinion, and he looked angrily at the nurse, but said nothing, lest his words should stop her confession.

"Without a friend or a character I could not gain an honest living; and as I had not the courage to die, I took to begging—and worse. I went up to town, of course; but that was after I had robbed the woman with whom I lodged, and whom I could not pay. I sent her the value of what I took, and more, when I'd been some time at the hospital; still, I know that doesn't undo the wrong.

"You are anxious for me to come to the point, and I won't keep away from it any longer. Well, in town, I ran against Mary Smith, and she told me she was Mrs. Thompson. I didn't believe that she was really married at first, and I warned her against the man who was the cause of my undoing; but she showed me her marriage lines, and, like

the good Christian that she was, she helped me with the villain's money.

"I knew from the first that she was not happy, but she never complained to me until he had deserted her, as he had deserted me. He was going to India, and she knew it; and a little while before his ship sailed he quarrelled with her, and told her that she should never see him again. Their marriage, he said, was not legal, because they had not lived in the parish where the banns were published; he had had the banns put up at Haggerstone whilst they were both at Croydon, but he lied when he said that this made any difference to the legality of the marriage.

"Well, as I said, there was a quarrel, and his wife tried to prevent him leaving her in anger; she clung to him, and would not let him go; and finally he knocked her down, giving the poor thing a black eye as a parting gift.

"She came to me in her trouble, weeping as though her heart would break, because she could not give me any more help, and because she feared she would never set eyes on the villain again. Still, she knew where his folks lived, and that he was going down there for a few days before he sailed; and as she couldn't bear the idea of giving him up, and hadn't any money to speak of, I advised her to go down after him.

"Instead of seeing her husband, she was shown in to his father; and the old man told her that he had disowned and disinherited his son Philip, and certainly did not intend to acknowledge Philip's wife. He noticed the black eye, however, and guessed that her husband had given it to her; and then he said that he had subscribed a large sum towards the completion of the fever hospital, and offered her an introduction to the matron, who would probably take her as a nurse on probation, if she presented his recommendation.

"Mary took the letter, and came away from the house; but before she had got to the station, her husband overtook her. She said she was sorry he had been disinherited; and he cursed her, and said it was all her fault, and that he would be a pauper all his life, because his father would never forgive him as long as she lived.

"Well, she loved the fellow more than she did her life, which he had ruined; and when they parted she had promised to die that night, and he had pledged himself to pass the night in praying for her—just as if his prayers were likely to do any one any good. A kiss and a promise to pray was the price he paid for his freedom.

"The poor wife came to me, and gave me her marriage lines, some verses which her husband had given her, and other things which she did not want any more, besides the letter of introduction, which she told me I might use if I liked. She could do nothing with it herself, she said—even if she did not keep her promise to her husband—as she was likely to become a mother; and she gave it to me, so that she might rescue one of her husband's victims from a life of crime.

"I did try to persuade her not to throw away her life to please a villain; but as I feared to lose my chance of escaping from a life of infamy if I called in the assistance of the police, I let her go unto her doom, wretch that I was!"

"Was Mary Smith the woman who committed suicide in the Waddon millpool?" Dick asked, after a long pause.

"Yes," the nurse replied.

"You have said nothing yet about your husband," he continued.

"I was married to Samuel Soper yesterday," the nurse answered sadly. "But he thought I was the alderman's wife, and that the marriage would consequently be illegal; and when he found that he was bound to me for life, he was angry, and we parted. Before our marriage, however, he had told me about the forgery of the will under which the alderman took all your grandfather's money; and when we were parting, and I told him that I should come to you and confess all, he said he would turn Queen's evidence to save himself, if you would give him the chance."

"May I ask you what object you have in coming here to tell us all this?" Dick inquired.

"I want the man who is morally guilty of the murder of Mary Smith to be punished," she answered.

"You must give us time to think the matter over," Dick said. "We cannot come to any decision at once."

"Very well," she replied, "you know where to find me if you want me again. But please ask for me as Miss Smith, for no one in the hospital knows that I am married, and now that my husband does not wish me to live with him as his wife, I should like to stay where I am. It is the only place where I can do a little good in the world, and I have been there so long that I should not like to leave in disgrace."

Lily noticed that tears were trickling down the cheeks of the repentant woman; and the little maiden went to the nurse, took her by the hand, and said how thankful she was to the poor woman, who had confessed her faults in order that the innocent might no longer suffer. The guilty woman had been shown but little kindness, and ennobling love had never since her infancy been granted to her; and though she had been tempted and had sinned, she had seized the first opportunity to escape

from a life of shame, and had never sunk to the lowest depth of infamy. She was very grateful to Lily, and though she could not say this in words, the little maiden was able to read the thoughts passing in the mind of this woman, who was not hopelessly lost to virtue.

CHAPTER XX.

THE WANDERER'S RETURN.

PHILIP THOMPSON had lodgings in Mulberry-street, Liverpool, but he spent most of his time in the public reading-room. There he looked at the reviews, and carefully examined the lists of forthcoming books in the *Athenæum*, the *Academy*, and the *Literary World*; but his own novel was not mentioned, and week after week he waited, hoping that it would be announced in the next issue. He wrote a little, too; but night after night he could not sleep, and pain, weakness, and nervous depression,

made the days seem long.

He bore his sufferings bravely, because he thought that Lily would benefit by his absence. But day by day he felt that he was losing strength; and his cough became more troublesome, his appetite failed him, and he could only write for a few minutes at a time. Then the pain became more acute, and he was con-



PHILIP THOMPSON IN THE COFFEE-ROOM AT THE WHITE HART.

finely to his bed; and when he became better the doctor warned him that he had not long to live, and advised him to go to his friends. He was very weak, and he knew that his end was near; and the longing to say a parting word to the dear child entrusted to his care, became too powerful for him to overcome. But he made up his mind to see her at the alderman's house, and to do so, if possible, without allowing the adventuress, who called herself his wife, to know that he had returned.

The long journey to London was safely accomplished; and he rose early the following morning, and went down to Romford. He knew that the alderman usually came up to town by the ten o'clock train; and he met this, and saw his brother drive up to the station.

The alderman had received a telegram, stating that Samuel Soper had been arrested at Dover; and with this attempt to escape Dick's apo'ogy, and his brother's absence in

his favour, the auctioneer anticipated an easy victory. But whilst he was rejoicing in the anticipation of the punishment of the man who had been his partner, he recognised his brother, standing by his side; and his face became suddenly pale, and he trembled with fear.

"You here!" he exclaimed in anger and alarm.

"Yes," Philip answered. "I wanted to see Lily again, and I could not wait any longer."

"Hush!" the alderman said. "We must not be seen together."

"Could I come to your house to-night?" Philip asked.

The alderman hesitated, and then replied, "Come exactly at midnight, and let yourself in to my library by the conservatory. I will see that all the doors are left open; but you must keep yourself out of the way during the day, and be seen by nobody."

"I am much obliged to you," Philip answered.

"Everybody will be in bed at that hour, and no one will see you. I will explain everything to you then; but you must give me your word of honour that you'll come, for I can't take all this trouble for nothing," the alderman said, looking sharply at his brother.

"I pledge you my word of honour," Philip replied, and then the alderman left him abruptly.

Philip was tired, and he went to the White Hart hotel to rest. He had taken no breakfast, but he was suffering acute pain, and had no appetite; and he only ordered a cup of tea.

There were two commercial travellers in the coffee-room, and he took up a newspaper to hide his face, which bore traces of the agony he was enduring. At first, he did not listen to what the two men were talking about; but he soon heard his brother's name mentioned, and then he paid some attention to their conversation.

"I should not like to stand in Samuel Soper's shoes for something, I can tell you," one of them remarked. "The alderman is not a man to be trifled with, I'll answer for it; and yet there may be some truth in the little man's accusation—I won't deny that."

"He's accused of forging a cheque for a thousand pounds," said the other, "and also with trying to obtain money by threatening to prove that the alderman forged his father's will and committed bigamy. It doesn't sound probable—now does it?"

"You must remember the alderman's only son charged his father with committing the same offences, and though the alderman prosecuted for assault, he did not dare to go into the witness-box to stand cross-examination. That looks fishy, doesn't it?"

"The son's a ne'er-do-well, I suppose?" the other rejoined.

"Not at all; he took a first-class in classics at Oxford not long ago, and all the people about here, who know him, speak in his favour," the elder commercial replied.

"How was it father and son fell out?" the younger man asked.

"Oh! the son was in love with his cousin; but as she wasn't worth sixpence the alderman wouldn't hear of the match; and first of all he turned his son out of doors, and then did ditto to his niece. But I daresay you've seen the girl, for she's playing at the Adelphi under the name of Lily Flower."

"I've heard of her," said the other, "but I haven't seen her yet. Plucky sort of girl, I suppose? Well, I don't mind them lively-like."

"This affair will turn out sensational, I expect; for we're likely to have the son in the box against his father, and Mr. Alderman Thompson won't be able to escape cross-examination this time."

"I don't know that," replied the other. "It's a felony to try to get money by threats, even if the charge is true."

"Yes, but still counsel can cross-examine him as to character, if he goes into the box to swear that the signature to the cheque is not genuine. He can't get over that."

"I suppose they haven't an old paper with a report of the assault case in the house?" the other man inquired.

"Yes, they have, for William showed it to me last night," was the answer.

One of the men touched the bell, and the waiter soon found the number of the local newspaper which gave a full report of Dick's trial for assaulting his mother and the footman.

Philip Thompson was alarmed for Lily's safety; the paper, he held, fell from his hand; and for a moment the commercial travellers were astonished by the sight of his thin pale face. He felt choking, the room seemed to be going round, and his head throbbed; but soon the pain ceased, and he became unconscious.

When he recovered, besides himself there was only a doctor in the room; and this gentleman was leaning over him and asking him how he felt.

"I am better now," he replied, "but I am almost worn out."

"You should go home," the doctor said, "for you are very weak and ill."

"I am going," Philip replied, "but I will take a cup of tea first, as it may give me a little strength for my journey."

"Your tea is cold; for you have been unconscious a long time," the doctor answered.

"I will order some brandy and water for you, but you must not travel alone."

"Oh! I am much stronger now," Philip Thompson said. "I have something to do in town, and shall get on all right, thank you. But I will take a little brandy and water, as I have a tiring day's work before me."

"You are not fit for work of any sort," the doctor replied, "and if you over-exert yourself it may cost you your life."

"In any case," Philip said, "that is not worth many days' purchase, is it?"

"Then it is not my sad duty to tell you this for the first time," the doctor answered.

There was a momentary pause, and then the doctor continued: "If you do not excite yourself you may still live longer than we have a right to expect; but you must not travel alone."

"I must," Philip replied. "I am stronger than you think. Indeed I am!"

Dr. Robinson shook his head, but he had no authority to detain a stranger; and he accepted his fee, and went away on his rounds to his patients. Then Philip was driven to the

station, and he went up to town; and having arrived at Liverpool Street station, he took a cab to Mrs. Edwards' house in Keppel Street, where he hoped to find his daughter.

On the way he wondered what he should do if Lily were not there; and then the pain came on, and each breath he drew and each beat of his heart he feared would be his last. It was only another fainting fit, and he soon recovered; but when he arrived at Keppel Street, he could not walk without assistance. He was very glad to hear that Lily was in; and whilst Mrs. Edwards was helping him

up the stairs, the little maiden rushed down to meet him. Lily had been told by the servant of her father's arrival, and she was happier than she could have told in words; but then suddenly she saw him, and all signs of joy faded away from her cheeks.

The poet's wan face foreboded coming death; and his daughter could scarcely restrain her tears, as she welcomed him back. For a little while he could not talk to her or

to Dick, who had now almost recovered from the illness which want of food had caused; but when he had taken a glass of wine, and had regained a little strength, Lily told him that his innocence was proved.

It took her some time to mention all that had happened during his absence, but while she spoke she was sitting close to him, and his arm rested on her shoulder. She forgot the fear which his appearance had caused, and for a little while he suffered no pain, and was very happy.

This intermission, however, did not last long, and the agony returned, and with it the recollection of the fact that he had not long to live. He saw, too, that Lily was aware of his suffering, and wishing to comfort her, he said—

"Little one, the joys of this life are alloyed with pain, but in the world for which we are here preparing, there will be only happiness and bliss. I shall meet your mother soon, and you in time will come to us, and we shall abide together in loving unity. Even hope, that can so easily deceive mankind, cannot array the future in fancied beauty

greater than that which is to be." He spoke in a pleasant tone, but as he kissed Lily, his eyes were full of tears, for he found the parting bitter, now that it had almost come.

"You are not dying, papa?" Lily said, sorrowfully.

"Yes, little one," he answered. "I am parting with the world, as we must all do, sooner or later. I have but a little while to tarry on



"IN THE WORLD FOR WHICH WE ARE HERE PREPARING, THERE IS ONLY HAPPINESS AND BLISS."

earth, but I would like to see you married and happy before I go hence."

The little maiden blushed, and glanced furtively at Dick, but she did not reply.

"I love Lily dearly," Dick said. "But I could not live upon what she earns on the stage. I objected to her adopting that profession, and I am sorry she could find no other occupation to suit her. But now I am poor, and she is rich; and we must wait awhile, as I must make myself independent before I can marry her."

"We should all endeavour to be of some use in this world," Philip Thompson answered, "and the actress upon the stage can teach a moral lesson; for if the playwright has done good work the part prepared for her must be worthy of a noble woman. But you need not live upon Lily's earnings; you also will do something, and what both gain more than you need you can give away to the poor. There are always some who are unable to labour, and their necessities you can supply. We should all help one another, and it was only false pride which prevented you accepting from Lily's hand the necessities which you required. It was not right of you to stay away from her, when you were in want; for life was entrusted to each of us for a good purpose, and no one has a right to lay his down at will."

Dick loved his cousin dearly, and was glad to be convinced; and when Philip Thompson urged that he would not be alive to see his daughter married, unless this ceremony were celebrated without delay, Dick consented to go at once to Doctors' Commons to obtain a license. But then he remembered that he had no money, and he did not like to ask his uncle or Lily for any. He hesitated, and looked foolish; but Lily soon guessed the cause of his embarrassment. She begged him to stay a minute, and when she returned to the room she shyly gave him her purse.

Lily and her father were left alone, and the little maiden told Philip Thompson again how glad she was to welcome him back. Her voice was low, plaintive, and inexpressibly sweet; but though she was trying to rejoice at her father's return, she could scarcely restrain herself from weeping whenever she looked at his face and saw how ill he was.

"Do not be sad, little one," he said. "I want to see you happy and contented, and to know that your future will be brightened by love."

She kissed him fondly, and then she asked him to allow her to send for a doctor; but he shook his head, and answered that it was beyond the power of any physician to help him.

"Lily, my pet," he continued, "I have almost reached my goal, and you would not wish to keep me here in pain and agony, if it were in your power. I shall be with your mother again, and in time you and Dick will come to us, and we shall all be happy together. You must not weep, little one, for you do not wish to dishearten me."

"I cannot bear to part with you, papa

dear," she answered, and then he kissed away her tears, as gently as if he had been her lover.

He spoke of her future happiness, and she blushed and looked pleased when he mentioned Dick; and she was glad when he began to read his nephew's comedy, and delighted when he stopped to criticise and to praise.

Dick returned with the license, and having forgotten the arguments which he urged against the marriage, he now thought only of the happiness he would enjoy with the fair maiden whom he loved. He kissed Lily, and she returned his caresses; and Philip Thompson, watching them, remembered the happy days of his youth, when Lily Montgomery was about to become his bride. But the pain soon recalled his thoughts to the present, and reminded him that he had only to do what he could for the happiness of others, and to die.

He had not forgotten his promise to the alderman, and when he had wished the young couple all the joy and gladness which their imaginations could picture to themselves, he told them that it would be necessary for him to go down to Romford to see his brother, and to listen to the explanation which the alderman had promised to make. Dick advised his uncle not to go, and Lily told her father that he was not strong enough for the journey, but Philip Thompson would not be persuaded.

"It is a duty," Philip said, "which I owe to my brother to listen to any plea that he can urge in his defence. If he has done wrong, I do not wish to punish him; but if Samuel Soper is telling the truth, William must withdraw from the prosecution. As to the money, even if it belongs to me I will not take it all from him; and he shall keep the business and Havering Hall.

"I do not wish you to be rich, Lily," he continued after a pause. "I wish you both to do some good work in the world; and if great wealth were yours, you would find this more difficult. You are now setting a good example upon the stage, and there in a quiet unobtrusive manner you will be able to assist those who are weaker than yourself. Dick can write well; and he has shown in this comedy that he can teach a good lesson, whilst affording amusement to those who require recreation after the labours of the day. If I am entitled to my father's money, he will use the greater part of it for the benefit of the poor. You will promise to do that, will you not, Dick?"

"Yes, uncle," Dick answered, taking Philip Thompson's thin hand. "I promise you; but I hope you will live to do this for yourself."

The poor invalid pressed Dick's hand, but he did not reply; the young lovers were happy, and he did not wish to speak again of death.

The time passed quickly, and Philip and Dick accompanied Lily to the theatre; and when they had left her there, they went on to Liverpool Street station, and thence to Romford. They stayed at the White Hart hotel until it was nearly twelve; and then they hired a carriage, and were driven to the gates of

Havering Hall. It was a dark night, and a little rain was falling; but Philip Thompson got out, and walked towards the house. Dick had wished to accompany his uncle; and as he was not allowed to do this, he waited a little, and then, keeping on the grass, at the side of the carriage-drive, he followed the invalid, who, he feared, might require his assistance.

Philip Thompson walked on slowly towards the house, resting every now and then to recover his strength. Pain and utter weariness of body oppressed him; and it was as much as he could do to pursue his way after a long interval of rest. He could not see distinctly, but he noticed that much had been changed since his last visit to his father's home. Here and there the underwood had grown up, thick and tangled; new shrubs had been planted, and flower-beds had been made; but there were still the old oaks and the old elms, and these large trees rose, gaunt and spectral, on the right and on the left.



PHILIP THOMPSON WALKED ON SLOWLY TOWARDS THE HOUSE.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN SUSPENSE.

THE alderman, after parting with his brother on the platform at Romford, began to consider whether it would still be advisable to continue the prosecution of Samuel Soper. This was a difficult question, and he did not come to any decision when he reached the City; but he went directly from Liverpool Street station to his solicitor's office, and told Mr. Jones that he had known Samuel Soper many years, and that he was loth to punish his late partner for the crimes which the fellow

had committed with such base ingratitude. The solicitor said he respected his client all the more for this emotion, which did such honour to the alderman's noble heart; but at the same time he stated that it was too late to abandon the prosecution, and that the criminal would only suffer the just penalty of his offences.

Mr. Thompson sighed, and acquiesced. He accompanied his solicitor to the Mansion House; and when Samuel Soper had been placed in the dock, charged with felony, the alderman went into the witness box and gave evidence against the accused. He swore that the cheque was a forgery, and that he had never authorised the prisoner to sign his name. With reference to the charge of attempting to obtain money by threats, he repeated to the alderman on the bench the tale which he had already told his solicitor; and even the lawyer whom Samuel Soper

had employed, believed the prosecutor's statement.

The banter's clerk swore that the handwriting, though somewhat resembling that of the alderman, differed from it in certain particulars; and he stated that he would have refused to cash the cheque, had it not been presented by the partner of the drawer.

A police constable gave evidence as to the arrest. Two hundred pounds in notes and gold, and a ticket for Madrid, were found in the possession of the prisoner; and when the accused had been cautioned that anything he might say would be used against him, he made a statement, and said:—

"The prosecutor wrote the cheque in my presence, and gave it to me. I could not

write well enough to form some of the letters on the cheque. I never had much education, being born before the School Board times.

"I first made the acquaintance of the prosecutor at Trinity Church, Haggerstone, when he was married to Mary Smith, a milliner, of Croydon. He didn't give his right name on that auspicious occasion, but called himself Philip Thompson; and as he was not accompanied either by an Amazonian army of bridesmaids or by a multitude of admiring friends and relations, my uncle, the parish clerk, gave away the bride, and I and my uncle were the witnesses to the marriage register.

"Three years later, whilst walking along Cheapside, down on my luck, through my uncle having died, leaving me unprovided for, who should run against me but the bridegroom as I had 'elped to a blooming bride! Instead of smiling at me sweetly, as in duty bound, he actually scowled at me; and so I began to chaff him.

"'It's a pleasure to see a gent with a smile like yourn in these hard times,' I says, says I. 'Matrimony must agree with you; and there's this to be said for it, that is the easiest sort of money to be honestly come by. I could get a little of it myself, but it don't pass current, and you can't sell a share in Hymen on 'Change. Women is down, for they've reaped such a precious 'arvest of babies, that the population is a reg'lar drag on the market. 'Ere am I, a orphan as nobody owns, and they'll rattle my bones over the stones, and give me a three years' lease of a pauper grave, all free, gratis, for nothing, afore I'm much older, if you don't shell out to one as 'elped you to a wife, and is a-starving 'isself in utter loneliness.'

"'I never met you before, and you are probably mistaking me for somebody else,' the prosecutor answered pompously.

"'That's all my eye,' says I. 'I ain't a born fool, I ain't. A stouter man, like you, may be a person of greater substance, but I'll wager a crown—as I hadn't got—that a starving man like me is the sharper. I know a man when I looks at 'im. Let me see, I say; but it ain't what the blind man said, for feeling was more in that chap's line.'

"'You may be mistaking me for a married brother of mine, as we are generally supposed to be much alike,' says he.

"'Oh!' says I, 'I twig. You're them twins that were mixed up in hinfancy, and one buried for t'other!'

"The prosecutor then condescended to contract the muscles of his nearer orbit; that is to say, in less refined lingo, he winked a wunk, and said:—

"'You were present at the marriage of my brother, Philip Thompson, and if anyone asks you about the matter, you had better say so.'

"'I won't be content with saying it,' then says I. 'I'll sing it to the tune of half-a-crown, or to any higher note that you likes to tip me.'

"Well, to cut a long story short, he struck the note suggested, and hurried off; but I

followed him to his lair, having a keen nose to scent a mystery. We often met after this, and upon each occasion Mr. Thompson gave me money, until, about a month after our chance meeting in Cheapside, he took me on as a porter in his father's business; and he supplemented my humble wages with a suitable salary for saying nothing about the clandestine marriage.

"Then, after I had been at the office a little while, the alderman's father died; and he made a will, or rather his son did for him. At any rate, I was at the office that night; and I neither saw Mary Smith, nor her ghost, though the real woman was drowned before that. In any case, the prosecutor brought me the will that night, signed by the testator; he asked me to put my signature as a witness, and I did so, not thinking that there was any harm. Afterwards, he told me not to mention anything about the will; and, as a reward for keeping silence, he took me into partnership. I was under age at the time, but I have received my thousand a year regularly ever since, though I have scarcely done any work.

"On the eleventh of last month I told the prosecutor that I wanted to retire from business, and he agreed to give me a thousand a year. It was expressly stated in the articles of partnership that I was to have nothing if he turned me out, but this was only put in so that I should obtain nothing if at any time I said I did not sign my name in the presence of the testator and of Mary Smith.

"The alderman agreed to pay me the first thousand at once, and he sat down to write a cheque. He told me to pretend to quarrel with him when he had written the cheque; and he spoke angrily to me, when he had opened the door so that the clerks might hear what he said. He's an artful old hypocrite, and he wanted to get rid of me for nothing; and in order to do so, he has accused me of forgery. He boasts of his charity to those who don't know him, but he never gave a sixpence to no one, and he only subscribes to the well-advertised charities."

This statement did not improve Samuel Soper's position, though it seemed to amuse all who were in court, with the exception of the prosecutor; and the prisoner was committed for trial, bail being refused.

The alderman went back to his office, but he could not work. He feared that Philip—angry on account of the charge of theft, of the treatment of Lily, and of the destruction of the manuscript—would prosecute him for forgery; and he thought that the death of his brother would make his position safe. He was aware that he could not be convicted of forgery on the uncorroborated evidence of Samuel Soper, and he did not believe that anyone would credit the little man's statement; but Philip Thompson's evidence would in some points corroborate that of Samuel Soper, and the foolish charge of theft which he had made against his brother would, alone, deprive him of the respect of his fellow-citizens, if Philip were to prove that the accusation was false.

He had no doubt that he would be able to come to terms with Lily and Dick, if necessary, by giving his consent to their marriage; but he had wronged Philip so grievously that he had no hope of gaining his brother's forgiveness; and as he recalled to mind the fact, that Philip was the only person who had much to gain by setting aside the will, he determined that his brother, who was coming to the library at midnight, should not leave his house alive.

The alderman's conscience troubled him a little, and he consequently tried to persuade himself that the crime he was about to commit was for the general good of mankind. He argued that with his capital he gave employment to many persons, and that these individuals would suffer if his money were handed over to his brother; and he wrote a cheque for a hundred pounds, payable to the secretary of the Universal Benevolent Society, of which he had lately been elected president.

He returned home by his usual train, and at dinner he told his wife that he was afraid Samuel Soper had defrauded him of other sums, besides the thousand pounds, and that he intended to spend the evening in going through a book in which his late partner's accounts were entered. He took more wine than was his wont, but it did not make him sleepy; and when he went to the library he sent for some cigars, some brandy, and a jug of water.

For some time he smoked and drank, but at eleven o'clock he became uneasy. He thought of Bruin, and he fetched a revolver, loaded it, and shot the poor creature, simply as an excuse for having the weapon at hand. He told his wife that the dog had disturbed him, and Mrs. Thompson, who had taken a great liking to the gentle animal, went weeping to bed.

Directly after Dick's departure, the weak woman had striven to make terms for her son, and she had even threatened to insist upon sharing her annuity with him. But the tyrant who ruled her, had tempted her with drink; and he had succeeded in making her abject, miserable, and contemptible.

The alderman went to see that the house was locked up for the night, and that all the servants had gone to bed; and when he had done door which led into the conservatory. Stealthily this, he returned to the library, and opened the he cracked a pane of glass in the conservatory door, and with some difficulty he removed the greater part of the pane. This he placed upon the floor; and then he returned to the library, leaving the door of this room open, in order that his light might be seen from outside. He looked at his watch, and found that it was a quarter to twelve. His collar irritated his neck, and he thought of the hangman's rope by

which some murderers perish. He drained a glass of brandy and water, and then he reconsidered his scheme; but he could find no fault with it, and he thought himself safe from the hands of justice.

Still, the very thought of his own death made him shudder; and when he closed his eyes he could see the hangman putting the rope around his neck, and the gallows upon which he was to die. He took more brandy to give him courage; but his imagination dwelt upon the terrors of death by the hands of the common hangman, and impotently he cursed his brother, who, he thought, had come back to demand his money, his business, and his lands.

"Death!" The alderman muttered the word, and as he did so, it seemed to him to have a weird sound. He walked up and down the room and repeated it to himself. His eyes were bloodshot, and he looked wild and fierce; and his hand shook as he lifted the glass, half full of brandy, to his lips. Then, the clock struck twelve; and he opened the door, leading into the hall; to see that no one was stirring. All was still, and the terror-stricken man was somewhat reassured. He was alone; the hour was nigh at hand; and he thought there would not be much risk. He unlocked and opened his oak desk; he took out some papers and tried to read them; and then he wrote "Dear Sir," and the date upon a sheet of note paper, that he might seem to have been disturbed whilst writing a letter.

He heard the sound of a man's footsteps outside; and he was afraid of what he was going to do.

Then the sound came nearer; his face was pale and his hands shook; but a little of his courage came back to him. He remembered that he could hear a man walking on the ground some distance off; and there was time yet for him to take some more brandy.

He poured out the spirit, and then gulped it down; and when he heard his brother's footsteps just outside, he was ready—to commit murder.

Philip Thompson knocked at the conservatory door. There was a momentary delay. The alderman took something from his desk. He looked at this for a moment; his mind was clear enough, though he did put his left hand to his forehead, which seemed to throb. He had made no mistake; his brother was now outside, and he held a pistol in his right hand.

There was another tap at the glass door which led into the garden. Then he entered the conservatory; he undid the bolt, and he opened the door. "Who's there?" he shouted.

Without waiting for a reply, the alderman fired. There was a shriek, like that of a man



A LOUNGER IN COURT.

in the agony of death, and then the sufferer fell heavily to the ground.

The alderman shouted out, "Thieves! thieves!" and ran back into the house. He sounded the gong in the hall, and before long some of the servants and his wife came down. He told them that he had shot a burglar, trying to enter the house; and, accompanied by the butler and footman, he went to the conservatory.

There they all stood for a moment, and the alderman thought he heard a groan. He was not certain whether it was a sound uttered by his brother, or only the wind moaning as it swept through the trees; but he was frightened, for he knew that a wound would make his position worse instead of better, and that only death could relieve him of the consequences of his former crimes. He went back to the library, took some brandy, and gave some to the men, and then they went out into the garden.

The night was dark, and the wind was high, and their candle blew out. They waited just outside the conservatory and listened; and the footman thought he could hear someone walking away in the distance. The alderman searched for the body of his victim; but, though he walked over the ground carefully, again and again, his feet did not stumble against the dread object that he sought. Then the villain began to fear that his brother had escaped; and he sent the butler for a lantern, in order that he might put an end to the uncertainty, which was causing him such grave alarm.

The wind howled round the house, and its

sound was something like the moaning of a man in agony. The alderman shouted out that he would shoot anybody he found, unless the person who was there came and gave himself up without resistance; but there was no answer. Then, whilst they were waiting for a light, the gate was closed; and directly afterwards they heard the sound of carriage wheels.

When the butler brought a lantern they searched, but they found no one. The alder-

man cursed and swore, declaring that he would bring the rogues to justice; and the footman said that it was a regular plant, and that the burglars had got away.

The villain was afraid of the consequences of the crimes which he had committed; and he feared that, with his brother as a witness against him, he would be unable to evade disgrace and punishment. He thought of a prison, and he shuddered as he fancied himself condemned to penal servitude for life as a punishment for perjury, forgery, and an attempt to murder. Death even, it seemed to him at that moment,

would be preferable to this lifelong imprisonment; and then it occurred to him that Philip's wound might be mortal. Again his imagination conjured up the hangman and the gallows, and the perspiration stood upon his forehead, though he felt cold as death.

With difficulty, he made his way back into the house; and, though he helped himself liberally to brandy, it did not give him either courage or hope. Still, after a little delay, he managed to tell his wife and the servants that,



THE ALDERMAN UNDOED THE BOLT, OPENED THE DOOR, AND FIRED.

whilst he was writing, he heard somebody trying to enter the conservatory, and that he then took the revolver, went into the conservatory, and shot at the fellow, who had opened the door, and was coming towards him.

When the alderman had given this account of what had occurred, he went round the house to see that it was properly secured, and then sent all the servants to bed. His wife took one of his hands in hers, and was about to tell him how glad she was that he had escaped from danger; but he turned away from her, and said he had other matters to think about, and did not want to be bothered. He remembered that, if he had not been so impatient, he could have put his revolver close to his brother's body, and shot him dead upon the spot; and he was vexed with himself, because he had not done this. He wondered in what part of the body Philip had been wounded; whether his brother would prosecute him or not; and how it would all end. His guilty conscience tormented him; and he feared the worst.

He could not run away, for he knew that a man of his build would be easily recognised, and soon captured by the police; and he was aware that his only chance was to remain and insist upon the truth of the tale which he had already told. But there was danger in this, too; and every now and then he started up, feeling an uncomfortable sensation about the throat, and fearing the hangman's grasp. His fat face bore a wild and troubled look; and he writhed, as if afflicted with some internal agony. He could not calmly consider his position, and he could not stay still; and he walked up and down the room, suffering paroxysms of fear, and with his mind full of wrath against himself for having failed in his attempt.

Then he stood still a moment and listened. He opened the door, and cast a fearful glance around; but there was no one outside. It was only the moaning of the wind that he had heard, and he locked the door again. His throat was burning, and he drank some water; but he could not quench his thirst, or put out the raging fever which made his blood seem hot as fire.

He woke his wife, and sent her to fetch some brandy; for he did not now dare to venture downstairs alone. He had already taken more

than usual, and was perhaps not quite sober; but the spirit did him some good, and after a little while he went to bed, though not to sleep.

The alderman was not troubled with remorse; but he was incessantly tortured by thoughts of his failure, and the consequences which this might entail upon him. Again he plotted the murder, and he thought how he could have done it with less danger to himself, and with absolute certainty of success. He remembered how skilful villains had murdered their victims, and only been detected by the omission of some details which at the time had seemed trivial to them; and he was wrath with himself because he had not studied the reports of their crimes in order to learn how he could slay his brother with the least danger of suffering the extreme penalty of the law.

He knew the saying, "Murder will out." But he would have been able to laugh it to scorn, he thought, had he not failed in his attempt. Now he knew that if his brother were to linger and then die, there would be little hope for himself; and if Philip should live, even then he could see no chance of escaping the penalty of the minor crime; and life-long imprisonment seemed to him too terrible to be borne by one like himself, who was accustomed to every luxury and comfort that wealth could buy.

He tossed about on the bed; and his body suffered from fever, and his mind was tortured by horrors conjured up by his imagination. He could not sleep, he could not rest; and more than once he buried his head beneath the bedclothes, hoping in the utter darkness to escape from the dread that haunted him. Lying there, breathing with difficulty, he fancied he could see his brother's corpse; and regularly as his heart beat, there came ringing in his ears over and over again the word murder, murder, murder!

Those who listen to one tune too often, are sometimes troubled with the refrain; and, even long after the music has ceased, this runs on in their ears. But a man troubled with a musical air can hum or play it, and by doing so can rid himself of the burthen; whilst the criminal, who heard his crime proclaimed again and again, was forced by fear to check himself, lest he should utter the word, and acknowledge himself a murderer.



CHAPTER XXII.
KINDLY DEATH.

DICK was not far off when the shot was fired, and he immediately ran to his uncle's assistance. He leaned over the fallen man, and he thought at first that Philip Thompson was dead. The open bloodshot eyes seemed to lack the power to see, the small white hands were cold and still, and the poet's face was pale as if the soul had left the clay. Dick, though still weak, tried to carry his uncle to the gates; but, finding this impossible, he hastened to fetch the coachman, and on his return he heard the wounded man's faint moan. Then they carried Philip to the carriage, and Dick told the coachman to drive quickly to the house of a doctor.

The medical man at once recognised the patient, whom he had seen at the hotel during the day; and the wounded man was put to bed, whilst the coachman went for a surgeon. This gentleman, who had been with the Turkish army during the last Russo-Turkish war, soon arrived; and Dick was sent away from the room in order that the medical men might be alone to discuss the condition of their patient. The young man sat down in the library to write a message to Lily on a telegraph form; and it took him some time to arrange his words, so that they should not cause his cousin any unnecessary pain.

When Dick had written this message, the surgeon and the doctor came downstairs; and they told Dick that there was no hope of their patient's recovery. The doctor said that Philip Thompson was in the last stage of consumption, and that he could not have lived much longer, if he had not met with any accident. The two medical men pressed Dick to say how their patient had been shot; and he told them all he knew in as few words as possible.

Philip Thompson remained unconscious all night, and his nephew and a nurse stayed with him. Slowly the minutes passed, and to Dick the night seemed endless. But after hours of weary watching the day dawned at last, and then the wounded man opened his eyes, and wondered where he was. After a while the past came back to him, and the pain became acute; he looked at Dick earnestly, and began to speak; but there was evidently a difficulty about his articulation, and his first words were inaudible.

"Was it my father who shot you?" Dick asked eagerly, when he had sent the nurse away.

Philip kindly put out his hand to his nephew, before he answered: "Dick, my boy, it is better that you should not know."

"My father will be suspected," Dick said, taking his uncle's hand, and looking wistfully at the dying man.

Philip could scarcely breathe; and had he not striven hard to bear the anguish, he would probably have again lost consciousness. Still, he pressed Dick's hand firmly; and, when the spasm was past, he replied:—

"My boy, I can say nothing which it would do you good to hear. I am sorry for you; but I pity your father more. I am going away, and I would carry no malice with me. I would like to say farewell to my brother, to hear him give his consent to your marriage, and to clasp his hand in friendship, before I start hence."

"If my father is a murderer, I cannot marry Lily," Dick said, thinking of what he would have to suffer for his father's crime.

"Dick," the dying man answered, "in a little while now Lily will be an orphan; and she will require some kind friend to protect her, and someone upon whom she can lavish the love of her young heart. You won her love, knowing well what you did; and now, when she will most require your sympathy and protection, you must not desert her. By doing so you would embitter your life—and hers."

"If I were to marry now, my wife would share the disgrace which has fallen upon me; and I love Lily too fondly to make her life wretched," Dick replied firmly.

"First love, which begins in childish companionship, grows up like the little lovers do; and when age has given it strength, the girl may die, but her love is immortal," Philip said.

"I love Lily dearly, but I cannot marry her now," Dick answered.

"When Lily comes," the dying man replied, "she shall decide for herself."

There was another attack of pain; and Dick, watching the pale, thin face, let a tear drop upon the hand of the man who lay there in anguish.

"Your silence gives consent," Philip Thompson continued, when he was again able to speak. "I should like to see Lily and William as soon as they come; but I am tired now, and until then I will try to rest."

Dick wrote to his father, and asked him to come and see the dying man. The note was short, for Dick neither mentioned the crime that had been committed, nor did he insert any message of affection. He did not wish to accuse his father; but, having considered all the circumstances, he had come to the conclusion that he was the son of a murderer.

Meanwhile, one night of agony had made the alderman appear much older; lines of care were plainly marked upon his forehead, his eyes were sunken, and his face was pale and haggard. He had determined to inform the police of the attempt to enter his house; and, having sent one of his servants to the station, he was waiting for the arrival of an officer when his son's note was brought to him. He read it, and it told him the worst: Philip was conscious, though dying.

The alderman would have done anything for his own safety, and he would have taken his brother's hand gladly, if thereby he could have escaped the consequences of his crime; but he supposed that this was some trap which had been set for him, and he determined not to be caught. He no longer entertained much hope of evading the penalty of his crime, and he was stricken with terror at the thought of his own death; but his mind revolted against the idea of the destruction of the only thing he loved, and he possessed a desperate determination not to lay down his life without a struggle.

The slightest circumstance caused him uneasiness, and he feared every one who approached him; and when the police-sergeant was announced, he trembled in every limb, and a cold sweat like that of death was on him. But the officer was most polite to the magistrate; and when the alderman understood that the man had only come in answer to his summons, some of his wonted presence of mind returned. Still, he longed to be innocent, even if innocence were only to be purchased at the price of his wealth; but, alas! the chasm between guilt and innocence can never be recrossed.

The miserable man showed the police sergeant the library and the conservatory; and the officer noticed that when the window shutters, and the iron door which led to the conservatory, were closed, no person outside could tell that there was a light within. On the tiled floor of the conservatory the officer

noticed the greater part of a pane of glass, and he asked how it came there. The alderman trembled, and he hesitated a little before he replied that he supposed the burglar had knocked it down.

"In that case," the policeman replied, "it would have been broken. But I will ask the men who came here with you last night whether either of them saw it, or placed it there."

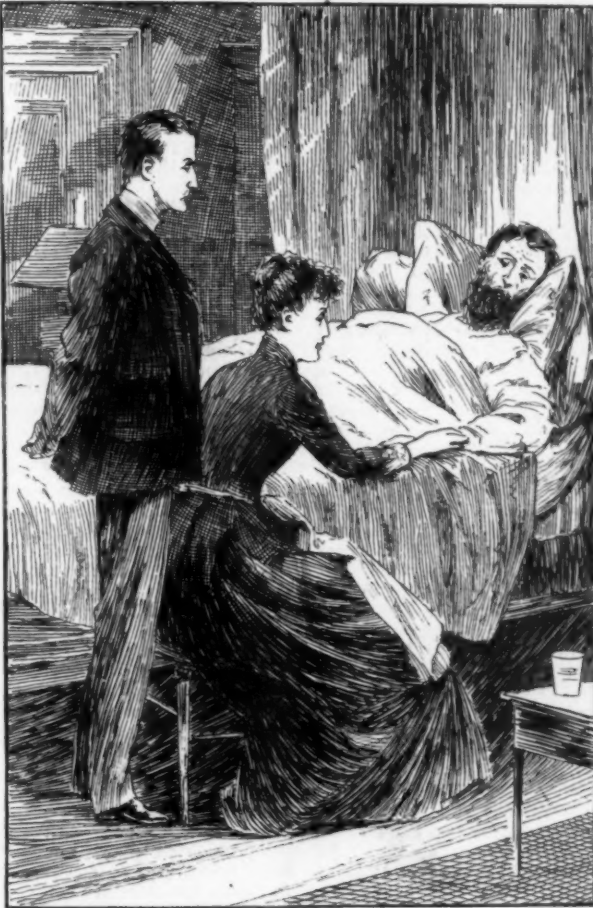
The butler stated that he noticed the broken

pane in the door and the piece of glass on the ground soon after he entered the conservatory; but the footman said that he knew nothing about it.

"Somebody in the house had something to do with this," the police sergeant said, when the two servants had left the library. "Now, do you usually sit in this room in the evening, sir?"

"Certainly not," the alderman replied angrily, fearing that he was already suspected, "I seldom work of an evening."

"When did anyone in the house first hear of your intention of working here last night?" the police



PASSING HENCE, TO MEET THE DEAR COMPANION OF A HAPPY BYGONE TIME.

sergeant inquired.

"After dinner," the alderman replied curtly. "Then one of your servants had a hand in this," the sergeant of police stated emphatically.

The alderman was much relieved by this statement, and he told the officer that he had some valuable securities in his desk. He showed these to the man, and said that he intended to place them in the bank for greater safety.

"That's right, sir," the police-sergeant answered. "But I hope we shall catch this fellow; and if you wounded him, we shan't have so much difficulty. Still, as he was in league with one of your servants, I expect he's a knowing one."

The alderman was pleased, and he gave the sergeant a sovereign. "That is for your wife," he said, "as the law does not allow you to accept anything for yourself."

"Quite so, sir," the sergeant replied, "but thank you all the same. Of course, sir, as an alderman, you'll know the law better than me, but between ourselves the man must have shown violence, else it isn't justifiable to shoot them burglars, though they do pick us off without a word of warning."

"The fellow pushed the door open, and I naturally supposed he was about to attack me," the alderman answered. "People don't enter other folks' houses after midnight, you know, with the most honourable intentions."

"Quite so, sir," the sergeant observed. He went as far as the door, and then turned round to add, "My wife's much obliged, sir, or at any rate she would be if I had one. Thank you, sir. Good morning."

The alderman then told his wife that Dick was with Philip at Dr. Robertson's house, and that Philip was very ill. He said he could not go to his brother, as he could not afford the time; but he asked his wife to call, and he intimated that he would not be unwilling to forgive Dick, if in the future his son would try to atone for the past. He said he was always glad to forgive his neighbour, provided that the offender expressed contrition, and had really made up his mind to sin no more.

But long before this time Lily had been alarmed by Dick's message, and it had prepared her for the worst. Her father was sleeping, when she arrived at the doctor's house; and Dick told her what had happened. The little maiden stayed by her father's side; and whilst he lay asleep, she prayed for him. Then remembering how nobly he had spent his life, she offered up prayers for herself, beseeching that strength might also be given unto her, to enable her to do good work in this world. The dying man had taught her to deem death a parting, sad only for those who tarry upon earth; and she looked forward hopefully to the time when she would meet her parents again, having accomplished her earthly pilgrimage.

The doctor told her that she might moisten the sufferer's parched lips; and when she had done this, her father opened his eyes again, and recognised her. He put out his thin hand, and she took it and kissed his forehead.

"Little one," he said, "you love Dick, and he loves you; and so I want you both to promise me that you will marry without any unnecessary delay."

"Lily," he continued, as soon as he was again able to speak, "you are like a delicate plant, and require something to which you can cling for support; and the love of a good man will give you strength to bear the troubles and

trials of life; and you, Dick, will find the loving sympathy of a gentle woman most comforting when the worries of life have tried your patience. Remember me kindly, but do not grieve for me; save your sorrow for those who are left to live on in misery; and help them to the extent of your means."

Dick's and Lily's hands met, but neither spoke; still, the dying man understood their silent consent, and rewarded them with a smile.

Mrs. Thompson now arrived at the doctor's house, and Mrs. Robertson told her how Philip Thompson had been shot. The good woman was shocked by this information, and she went at once upstairs to Philip's room.

"William never meant to hurt you," she said to the dying man. "He thought a burglar was entering the house, and at that time of night he could not expect you. It was unfortunate that Bruin barked so, for if he'd not taken the revolver to shoot the poor creature, it would not have been at hand when you entered."

Philip Thompson sighed.

"Tell William," he said, "that I forgive him for any wrong that he has done me. If wealth had been mine it would have been a temptation, and I might have failed to apply it to the best uses."

"Is there anything we could do for you?"

Mrs. Thompson asked in a broken voice. Lily and Dick were so moved by the dying man's words, and by the agony which he was evidently suffering, that neither of them could speak.

"I made my will whilst I was away," Philip replied, "and whatever I have will pass to Lily; but I should like William to have the ring that was our mother's, as a token of my forgiveness. I could not have lived any longer, had I not been shot; I knew I was dying of consumption, and I came back to see Lily for the last time upon earth."

Lily kissed her father, and he noticed that tears were running down her cheeks.

"Do not weep, little one," he said hopefully, "my pain will soon pass away; and I shall be with your mother again. You will wear the pendant with her portrait sometimes, and try to imitate her virtues, so that you may come to us some day."

"Yes, father," she said, "I will try and do all you say, but oh! I want you to guide me."

"God wills otherwise, my child," the dying man answered, "and Dick must be your guardian henceforth. But I am tired now, and I would like you all to take the last sacrament with me, before my spirit passes away."

He rested a little while, and then the service of the Church for the sick was read; and the dying man took the sacrament, accompanied by those who were nearest and dearest to him upon earth. It was a touching scene, and a sacred one; and when the clergyman had administered this last rite, the sufferer, calm, and still in the possession of all his faculties, was prepared to pass unto that bourn from which no man can return.

Dr. Robertson had given notice to the police, and two magistrates came to take Philip Thompson's depositions. But the sufferer said he wished to make no statement, and he told the magistrates that he was dying of consumption when he returned from Liverpool. They pressed him for particulars, but he courteously declined to give any further information.

When these gentlemen were gone, Philip Thompson said he would take no more medicine or nourishment, as he wished the bread and wine of the sacrament to be the last food to pass his lips. He said good-bye to his sister-in-law, kissed Lily and gave her his blessing, and bade Dick be kind to her. When he had done this he wrestled for a little while with the physical pain which oppressed him; but he was too weak to endure the agony long.

For some hours he lay unconscious. The day passed the meridian and waned, and the twilight fell upon the earth. Then he awoke, and looked again at those he loved, whilst the light still lingered in his eyes.

"Good-bye, my children," he said in a faint voice; "be happy together, and remember, throughout your lives, that one day we shall all meet again."

There was another attack of pain, a struggle, and then finally a parting between the soul and the clay. The body had done its duty, and the spirit, which had been prepared, by trials upon earth, for life in heaven, was soaring aloft unto the abode of bliss. The night was coming on apace, but the poet had gone hence unto a more glorious day, to meet the dear companion of a happy bygone time, where clouds cannot darken nor sorrows oppress.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE INQUEST.



N due course Dr. Robertson gave notice of Philip Thompson's death to the coroner, and that official held an inquest at the Court House in South-street. The jury-men went to the doctor's house to see the body of the deceased; and when they returned to the court, there were many persons

present waiting to hear the evidence.

Sir Henry George at once said: "The time has arrived when an arrangement should be made for questioning the witnesses. I understand that my learned friends, Mr. Frost and Mr. Holland, appear for the Crown, and Mr. Taylor for certain relatives of the deceased. Mr. Alderman Thompson has received notice

to appear, and it has been thought right, therefore, that he should be represented on this inquiry. He is represented by Mr. Colghan and myself, and I request that we may be permitted to ask any questions which may appear to us to be necessary in the interest of our client."

Mr. Taylor stated that Miss Lily Thompson and Mr. Richard Thompson, whom he represented, had been ordered to attend; and he asked that the privilege of questioning the witnesses might also be permitted to him. Mr. Frost expressed his desire that those who represented interests should be allowed to cross-examine the witnesses, and the coroner stated that this course should be adopted.

Dr. Robertson was then called by the coroner and sworn, and in answer to questions put to him by that officer he said:—

"The deceased died at my house on the thirteenth instant. I first saw him at the White Hart on the morning of the twelfth. He was suffering from consumption, and I considered that he could not live much longer. I told him so, and advised him to go to his friends. Excitement of any kind would be bad for a man in his condition, and I warned him of this when he informed me that he had a tiring day before him. He did not seem to pay much attention to my advice, and I could do nothing for him.

"I did not see the deceased again until the morning of the thirteenth, when I was called down to see him. Mr. Richard Thompson had brought his uncle to my house, and the deceased had then been wounded in the shoulder. I examined the wound, which, under ordinary circumstances, would not have been a dangerous one; but knowing the patient's condition, and fearing that it might prove fatal to him, I sent for Mr. Hunter, who has had much experience of wounds inflicted by firearms.

"We had no difficulty in extracting the bullet; but the patient's strength was exhausted, and at about six o'clock in the evening of the thirteenth instant he died, in the presence of Mrs. Thompson, Miss Lily Thompson, and Mr. Richard Thompson.

"I was present when the magistrates saw Mr. Philip Thompson; and I heard him refuse to make any statement. The magistrates informed him that some innocent person might be suspected of causing his death, in consequence of his refusal to answer their questions; but he only shook his head, and requested them to leave him.

"When I saw the deceased at the White Hart, I did not think he could live more than a few days; but I consider that his death was accelerated by the wound inflicted upon him. I cannot say how many more days or hours he would have lived had he not been wounded; I can only state with certainty that he would not have lived a week, and that going up to town, staying out of doors at night, and other causes of excitement were bad for him, and likely to hasten the end. The cause of death was acute phthisis, sometimes called galloping consumption. Its symptoms differ from those of ordi-

nary pulmonary consumption in the rate of progress; and softening of the tubercle, and the formation of cavities, do not always occur to any extent."

Mr. Hunter, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., was the next witness, and he stated that the wound would not have caused the death of a person in good health. In answer to Mr. Frost, he said it might have hastened the death of Philip Thompson, and that it probably did shorten the life of the deceased by a few hours. In answer to Sir Henry George, the witness said he could not swear that Mr. Thompson's death was accelerated by the wound.

Dick was then sworn, and in answer to a question put to him, he said, "My uncle told me that he had promised my father to go down to Romford."

Sir Henry George objected to this as hearsay, and it was rejected; but the coroner asked the question: "Did the deceased make a statement to you—yes or no?"

"Yes," Dick replied.

"In consequence of that statement did you do something?"

"Yes."

"What did you do?"

"I went down to Romford with my uncle, and I afterwards accompanied him to Haverling Hall. My uncle asked me to stay in the carriage, but as I knew he was very weak, I thought he might require assistance, and I walked a little way behind him. I heard the report of a revolver; and I ran up, and found my uncle wounded on the ground. I carried him part of the way towards the gate, and with the driver's assistance put him in the carriage in which we had come to the Hall."

"I believe you once accused your father of forgery, and of marrying one Mary Smith, taking his brother's name at the time of the marriage," Mr. Frost said.

"I did," Dick answered reluctantly.

"What made you suspect him?" the counsel asked, playing with his brief, smiling, and turning away, as if the answer to the question was of no importance at all.

"Samuel Soper was the only surviving witness to the marriage, and the only witness to the will who could ever be found. Mary Smith, the other witness to the will, could never be traced; and Mary Smith, who was married to some person who gave the name of Philip Thompson, was at one time acquainted with my father."

"Had you any other reason for suspecting him?" Mr. Frost asked, looking at Dick now, and smiling again.

"Only the report of the inquest held on Mary Smith, and the signature in the parish register," Dick replied.

"You have no other reason for suspecting your father?" the counsel said in a loud and angry tone. "Remember that you are on your oath. Now do you mean to swear that?"

"I had no other reason then," Dick answered.

"Oh! you had no other reason then. Well, what other reason have you now?"

Dick hesitated.

"Come now, the Court cannot be trifled with. We want to know what reason you have now that you had not then?"

"Oh!" Dick replied, quickly, "Samuel Soper has also accused him of forging the will, I understand."

"And what else?" counsel asked, quite certain now that the witness had not told all.

Dick did not answer, and the coroner warned him that he was bound to reply.

"Mrs. Soper told me——"

"I object," said Sir Henry George. "We cannot have hearsay."

"Who is this Mrs. Soper who told you something?" Mr. Frost inquired in his most dulcet tone.

"She is the wife of Samuel Soper," Dick said.

"Oh! the wife of the gentleman you have been telling us about. And where does she live?"

"At the London Fever Hospital," Dick replied.

"A most desirable residence, no doubt," the senior counsel for the Crown remarked, to the amusement of the public and the bar; "but couldn't you give us a little information about her, without telling us what she said?"

"She married Samuel Soper the day before he was arrested. She is a nurse at the hospital," Dick replied.

"Her maiden name was——?"

"Smith," Dick said.

"And her Christian name?" counsel inquired.

"Mary."

"Mary Smith, then! Not the real Simon Pure, I suppose, eh?" counsel asked. Then as the witness did not reply, he continued, "I mean, she was not the Mary Smith who witnessed the will, was she?"

"There was no Mary Smith who witnessed the will," Dick replied quickly, without thinking.

"Oh! ho!" exclaimed the counsel, approaching as near to a whistle as such a learned gentleman could be expected to come. "Now, perhaps you will tell us why you are sure of this," he continued, playing with his brief whilst he spoke. Dick was sorry that he had spoken so quickly, and he answered, "I cannot explain without repeating to you what Mrs. Soper said to me."

Mr. Frost sat down, and Sir Henry George jumped up, and inquired in a most pleasant tone if Dick had not lately been convicted of assault. Dick acknowledged that he had; and then, still in a friendly way, the eminent counsel remarked, "And you struck your mother, did you not?"

"Accidentally," Dick replied.

"Oh! of course," said the eminent counsel, "quite an accident, of course! When gentlemen pick pockets now, or ladies commit larceny at the Co-operative Stores, it is only an accident, as a matter of course." The

learned gentleman had a little laugh, and then sat down as quickly as he had got up.

Lily was then called, and she was forced to give an account of what happened when her father left home. Sir Henry George asked her whether her father had not sent messages of goodwill to his brother from his death-bed; and she replied that he had done so. She also said that, in consequence of her father's instructions, she had sent her uncle a ring which had been his mother's.

The butler was next sworn, and he said that he was with his master after the alarm had been given on the morning of the 13th inst. He understood that a burglar had tried to enter the library of the hall, and that the alderman had fired a shot. They did not find the body of any person, but they heard somebody walking away, and when they had been listening a little while a carriage started from the gates. He noticed a large piece of glass on the tiled floor of the conservatory, but he could not swear that the piece produced was

the same, though it looked like it. There were no small pieces of glass on the ground, but only the one large piece, and he did not know how it came there.

The police-sergeant, who had seen the alderman on the morning of the 13th, gave an account of the interview; and he swore that the piece of glass produced was that which lay on the floor of the conservatory when he called at Havering Hall. He had stuck a piece of paper on it, and had marked the paper; for he had considered it a suspicious circumstance that this should have been lying on the ground, unbroken. He examined the door, and he came to the conclusion that the window had been purposely broken, and that the piece of glass had been carefully taken out and placed on the floor. He thought so because the putty on the inside had not been removed, and he inferred that a blow was given to the pane whereby the piece of glass produced was knocked inwards, and that this was subsequently withdrawn from the window by lifting it upwards and a little towards the person removing it.

The alderman then volunteered to make a statement, and was consequently sworn. He said: "I am an alderman of the City of London, and one of the magistrates for the

liberty of Havering-atte-Bower. I saw my brother on the day he left London, and I advanced him the sum of £100 on the security of a novel. He told me I could do what I liked with it, and after he had left me I found that it was a red republican work, full of socialistic ideas. In spite of this, I took it to Mr. Pater-noster, and he offered me £250 for the copy-right. I went home and destroyed the manuscript, intending to give £150 to my brother on his return. I had unwittingly undertaken to put a novel with a highly immoral and socialistic tendency into circulation, and rather than do this I preferred to pay my brother the value of the copyright out of my own pocket. I destroyed the manuscript in the interest of humanity at large, and I consider myself a public benefactor."

When the alderman had said this he looked round the court proudly, as if he wished to express by his manner, "That is the sort of man I am!"

"The reason why my brother left London, was because a woman, who called herself Mary Smith, claimed him as her husband. She had a certificate of marriage, and my late partner, Samuel Soper, declared that he was present at the marriage. My brother assured me that no such ceremony took place, but the evidence of the certificate and that of a witness was against him.

"As to the charge of theft, which it is said I

brought against my brother, it was all a cock-and-bull story, invented by Samuel Soper's lively imagination. He is a wonderful man for telling lies, and if he had only followed the trade of novel-writing, I am sure he would have beaten my brother out of the field. I asked him to break the news gently to my niece, but instead of doing this, he told her that her father would never return, and made up a tale about the theft. But he did not do this without a reason; he was in love with her, and he thought she would not consent to marry him unless she were humiliated. When he told me what he had done I was very angry with him; but he pleaded that all was fair in love and war, and he promised that he would turn over a new leaf in future, if he could only have a good wife to guide his footsteps into the path of righteousness. Samuel Soper was not a religious man, for he did not mind what he did on Sundays, and he seldom went to church. He could not



MR. ALDERMAN THOMPSON WAS REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL.

even plead the excuse that he was a Dissenter, as he never frequented any place of worship; and he sometimes said such blasphemous things about the ark and other passages in the Old Testament that he made my hair stand on end. I remonstrated with him, but it was of no use. I gave him good advice to no purpose, and I thought a well-brought-up and properly-regulated person, like my niece, might do him good in this world, and prepare him for a place in the next."

When the alderman had said this he paused, and looked round the court-house with a self-satisfied air; for he had come to the conclusion that the best thing he could do was to face the question boldly, and let people understand what a moral man he was.

"Samuel Soper duly proposed to my niece," he continued, "and I offered to give her a dowry. I did not wish her to marry my son, for though I liked the girl, I disapprove of marriages between near relations. My brother and I married two sisters, so the young folks were doubly cousins; and this I deemed an insuperable objection to their union. I am still averse to their marriage; and if I could prevent it, I would do so. I do not think that my niece was any more to blame than my son; they fell in love, and Lily would have nothing to do with Mr. Soper. As his conduct since then has shown that he only wanted money, and not a wife to be a moral guide and comforter, I am glad she refused his offer; but I do not think she was justified in leaving my house without telling me of her intention.

"I now come to my brother's return to London. I saw him at the station, and I was much surprised by his appearance. He told me that he wished to talk matters over with me, and I said I was willing to do so, but I made no arrangement to see him that night at twelve o'clock. I went up to London by train, and I expected he would either come to see me at my office in Bucklersbury, or else call at the Hall at a reasonable hour. I did not suppose for a moment that he would come in the middle of the night, or that he would walk in without knocking.

"I was going through some accounts on the evening of the twelfth, and I was much disturbed by the barking of a dog. It was a noisy brute, and I fetched a revolver and shot the beast. I returned to my work, and at twelve o'clock I was deep in my accounts. The conservatory door was opened, and some one entered. The revolver was close to me, and I took it up. I went into the conservatory, and a man came towards me. I was frightened, and without looking up—I fired.

"I am not a greater coward than other men, but I must own I was alarmed by the appearance of a midnight visitor. I called out 'Thieves!' and then ran to the hall, and sounded the gong. I soon returned with two of my servants, and we searched for the body, but we found no one there. We heard the gates close, and a carriage started directly afterwards; and we supposed that the burglar had made his escape. I gave notice to the

police; and the evidence of the police-sergeant, as to what was said, is substantially correct. I had a note from my son, saying that my brother was dying, and I asked my wife to go and see him. I went up to town, having business to attend to, and I proposed to see him in the evening. Unfortunately, my brother was then dead."

The alderman took out his handkerchief, blew his nose, and looked sorry; and then, as Mr. Frost rose to cross-examine him, the witness pulled himself up to his full height, and looked determined.

"Who was present when your father's will was signed?" the counsel inquired.

"My father, Samuel Soper, Miss Smith, and myself."

"Who was this Miss Smith?" counsel asked.

"I do not know. She came in to see my father, and stayed to witness the will. I never saw her before, and have not met her since," the alderman replied.

"Now did you know a Miss Mary Smith at Croydon, whilst you were a cadet at Addiscombe?" the learned counsel asked, whilst he pretended to be reading his brief.

"Yes," the alderman answered.

"Were your relations with her intimate?" counsel for the Crown continued, without looking up.

"I must decline to answer that question," the witness replied.

"And I must insist upon your answering it," counsel said, looking at the alderman fiercely.

"I must urge that it has nothing whatever to do with the case," Sir Henry George observed, "and consequently I object to the question. We are now inquiring into the circumstances attending the death of Philip Thompson, and we have nothing to do with a Miss Smith, who died more than twenty years ago."

But the coroner decided that the question should be answered.

"I forget what it was now," Alderman Thompson said, and the public who patronised this free entertainment laughed heartily.

"Were you upon intimate terms with Mary Smith of Croydon?" counsel asked, pressing his lips together in pleasant anticipation.

"I flirted with her, when I was a mere boy," the alderman replied.

"You did not marry her?" counsel inquired.

"No."

"Did she leave Croydon with you?"

"No."

"Did she ever live with you as your wife?"

"No."

"Your flirtation was an innocent one?"

"It was innocent, but foolish. I may have raised false hopes in her mind," the alderman said. "I regret this, for she went to the bad, though not through me."

"Did the supposed burglar threaten you in any way?" counsel asked.

"The person who entered was moving towards me, and so I fired. I should not have

done so if I had known that it was my brother."

Mr. Frost sat down, and Sir Henry George rose and said: "You fired the shot because you supposed that the person was about to attack you?"

"Yes," the alderman replied. "But I shall never cease to regret firing that shot to my dying day; and the only comfort I have, is the knowledge that my brother could not have lived any longer if he had not been wounded."

The coroner summed up the evidence, and the jury, after deliberating for about an hour and a half, returned the following verdict:—

"We find that the deceased, Philip Thompson, died of consumption, and that his death was accelerated by a wound inflicted with a revolver by William Thompson; but there is not sufficient evidence to show whether William Thompson fired the shot by misadventure, or, if he did so, knowing that his brother stood before him, and with malice aforethought."

The alderman left the court with a melancholy countenance and concealed joy; and the verdict met with considerable animadversion from the public press as tending to cause suspicion, which could neither be verified nor refuted. On the same day the newspapers, which gave a report of the inquest, announced that the grand jury at the Central Criminal Court had returned a true bill against Samuel Soper.



CHAPTER XXIV. IN COURT.

TRIAL of Samuel Soper took place at the Central Criminal Court a few days later;

and the indictment charged the prisoner with forging a cheque, and with uttering the same, knowing it to have been forged.

Sir Henry George and Mr. Matthews conducted the prosecution, and the prisoner was defended by Mr. Montague Stephens. Sir Henry George stated the case for the Crown, and a clerk from the Metropolitan and County Bank then proved that the prisoner had cashed the cheque.

Mr. Alderman Thompson swore that the cheque was neither written nor signed by him, and he stated that he believed the handwriting was that of the prisoner. In answer to Mr. Montague Stephens, he said he did not marry Mary Smith, and that he never saw her after he left the military college. He had not read the report of the inquest held upon her body, and he did not remember where he lived in London, after he had left Addiscombe. Samuel Soper was under age when taken into the firm as a partner, and at that time he had not received a good education. The witness also admitted that the prisoner's ordinary handwriting was a wretched scrawl, and that, al-

though he had received a thousand a year for about twenty-five years, he had never really earned it, but had only been kept on out of charity.

The evidence of the policeman who had arrested the prisoner completed the case for the prosecution; and when the judge returned, after the adjournment for luncheon, Mr. Montague Stephens rose, and stated that his case was that Mr. Alderman Thompson wrote the cheque himself, and purposely made it appear a forgery, in order to have the prisoner arrested.

The certificates of the marriage and death of Mary Smith, the verdict of the jury which was empanelled to inquire into the circumstance attending the death of Philip Thompson, and a transcript of the shorthand-writer's notes taken upon that occasion, were admitted by Sir Henry George, and read.

Two experts, who had examined the cheque and had compared it with the alderman's handwriting, were of opinion that it was written by the prosecutor, and that certain letters had been made to imitate those of the prisoner. They said the clear clerly hand of the alderman, and a letter here and there somewhat similar to those found in the prisoner's wretched scrawl, gave the whole a very peculiar appearance. Several witnesses repeated the evidence which they had given before the coroner, and a banker's clerk proved that the prisoner had seven thousand pounds invested in marketable securities.

Mr. Montague Stephens, in an able speech, said that the prosecutor was not a man whose evidence could be trusted; he referred at some length to the statement which the prisoner had made to the magistrate, and to the evidence given at the inquest; and he urged that the evidence of the experts was altogether in favour of the prisoner at the bar.

Sir Henry George then replied on the part of the prosecution, and he said that the prosecutor was a man of high standing in the City of London, and one not at all likely to commit the crimes alleged against him. He reminded the jury that the prisoner was not liable to cross-examination, and that his statement was consequently not entitled to the same weight as sworn testimony; and he urged that, if they believed the evidence of the alderman, they would be bound to convict the prisoner.

The learned judge then summed up the evidence to the jury, and said: "Gentlemen of the jury, the case for the prosecution depends entirely upon the oath of the prosecutor, who has sworn that he did not write the cheque which the prisoner cashed. The experts, called for the defence, are of the opinion that the prosecutor did write the cheque; but his evidence is the best possible, provided that he has told the truth. You, however, must decide whether or not he is worthy of credit. It is strange that he kept the prisoner for five-and-twenty years, and paid him a salary of a thousand a year; for that is what the partnership arrangement really was. He admits that the prisoner did little for the money, and says he

kept the prisoner out of charity. He could have dissolved the partnership almost as easily as he could have dismissed a clerk; but did he keep the prisoner because he was afraid of an inquiry as to whether the late Edward Thompson's will was duly attested? If you believe that the will was not duly attested, you must reject the prosecutor's evidence, and then certainly there is not sufficient evidence to support a conviction. I must go even further than this. If you have any reasonable doubt as to the truth of any part of the prosecutor's evidence, you must decide in favour of the prisoner. He has a right to the benefit of any reasonable doubt, and should you find a verdict of not guilty, you will not necessarily be declaring that the prosecutor has been guilty of perjury. Gentlemen of the jury, you will now consider your verdict."

After a short consultation, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty, and the judge then ordered the prisoner to be discharged. This was done, and Samuel Soper went to his solicitor and counsel, and thanked these gentlemen for their able services. Meanwhile the alderman was complaining to his solicitor and to his counsel that they had not done all they could. He said that Sir Henry George might have obtained a verdict, had that eminent counsel made a more eloquent appeal to the jury; and Sir Henry George replied that it was the duty of counsel for the prosecution to assist in ascertaining the truth of the charges, and not to struggle for a verdict.

Just then a police officer approached the alderman and said, "I am Inspector Marshall. I must take you into custody for the wilful murder of your brother. This is a serious charge, and I caution you that whatever you say I must reduce to writing, and it may be given in evidence against you at your trial."

The alderman looked round fiercely at the speaker. "I am an alderman of the City of London, and a magistrate of the liberty of Havering," he said. His face was flushed at first, but it soon became pale.

"Have you a warrant, Inspector Marshall?" the alderman's solicitor asked.

"Yes, sir," the inspector replied, handing

the document to the solicitor. "I have my orders from Scotland Yard."

"You have no objection to my accompanying my client, I suppose?" the solicitor observed.

"None at all, sir."

"Very well; we will take a cab," Mr. Jones replied.

"As you like, sir; but I must come inside with you, and you must allow a policeman to ride on the box," the inspector said respectfully.

"I have no objection," the solicitor answered. "You will allow me to put up my papers in this case, and give them to my clerk?"

"Certainly, sir."

This was done, and then the alderman was taken to prison. In the cab he sat quite still, and did not speak a word; his face was pale and haggard, and he thought of death and the gallows, but his heart was so full of hatred and malice that he could not offer up a prayer.

The windows of the cab had been pulled up, and he felt as if he were being stifled. Horror and fear, too, stupefied him; and he began to mutter that he was an alderman of the City of London, and that the insult offered to him was a wrong done to the Corporation.

At the prison the solicitor was allowed to see his client alone in a cell, and Mr. Jones asked the alderman if he wished to give any explanation which would throw some light upon the statement made by Samuel Soper, and thus enable counsel to prepare the defence.

"It's all a pack of lies," the alderman said; and then, remembering that he could not prove this, he began to curse and swear.

"If we only prove that some material part of Samuel Soper's statement is untrue, no jury will believe the rest. Now we must try to find out where your brother lived with this Mary Smith when he had married her, and obtain evidence to prove that he did live with her," the solicitor said. "We shall probably be able to learn, so you need not be uneasy."

"No one would like to be shut up here, waiting for trial on a capital charge," the alderman replied angrily.



THE ALDERMAN IN THE WITNESS-BOX.

"I am very sorry for you, and hope you will not be here long. But have you any idea where you were living after you left Addiscombe? Did you go to your father's house?"

"How should I know now?" the alderman exclaimed testily.

"Can you not think?" the solicitor asked.

"Not in this confounded hole," the prisoner replied.

"Now as to the will; who wrote that?"

"My father did," the alderman answered.

"Well, we must prove that by experts," the solicitor answered, "and we must employ detectives to learn where your brother lived with his wife."

The alderman did not reply; he thought that the less inquiry was made the better, but he did not say this, for he was determined not to acknowledge his guilt, even to his solicitor.

CHAPTER XXV.

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?

A MAN was being tried for his life at the Central Criminal Court, and matrons and damsels of high degree, and the daughters and wives of City men, had come to witness the drama. The seats in court had been reserved, and tickets of divers colours had been issued. The City authorities were the responsible managers; and the judge was only one of the leading performers, and had nothing to do with the arrangements for filling the house.

It was the sixth and last day of the remarkable cause, *Regina v. Thompson*, and the excitement had been progressive. The accused was an alderman of the City of London, and he was defending himself, though he had a solicitor in court, and a counsel ready to argue any legal point which might arise. The case for the Crown had been concluded, and the evidence was strong against the prisoner; but some people considered the alderman a victim to one of those unfortunate combinations of circumstances which are often more embarrassing and more dangerous than guilt itself.

The prisoner was called upon for his defence, and leaning forward, he bowed slightly to the judge and jury, and then said:—

"My lord and gentlemen of the jury,—I stand here charged with the worst of all crimes; and I acknowledge that, if I were guilty of the murder of my brother, I should certainly deserve the punishment of death by the hands of the common hangman."

The alderman spoke firmly, but many of the women and some of the men present were now seen to shudder; whilst others, thinking of the black cap and excitement which a tragic ending to the trial would afford them, smiled hopefully, and then looked at the prisoner through their opera-glasses.

"You will be patient with me, I trust, whilst I give you all the particulars of this unfortunate case; for I alone can tell you the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Not one of the witnesses has attempted to do more than forge one or two links in the chain with which the prosecution is striving to drag

me to the gallows; and Samuel Soper and his wife have wilfully perjured themselves.

"Samuel Soper was an honest man enough until he made the acquaintance of the courtesan who is now his wife. You know well enough what men will do for love when their worst passions are aroused. You may have read of young George Barnwell, whom a woman tempted as Eve tempted Adam. He murdered his uncle, who was his best friend, with the dagger of an assassin; but Samuel Soper, whose benefactor I am, is trying to condemn me to a far more terrible doom.

"Now we must try to ascertain who this woman is that has led Samuel Soper from the path of virtue; and her own evidence is the only clue we have. She was in a milliner's shop at Croydon; so was Mary Smith. Moreover, she was in the same shop as Mary Smith; and she has said that she was unduly intimate with the man Mary Smith married. Now, gentlemen of the jury, I say that she was Mary Smith, and that she did marry my brother." The prisoner said this in a loud voice, and the Attorney-General, Mr. Montague Stephens, and Mr. Colghan, who appeared for the Crown, were busy with their pens. The ladies, however, were not aware how important it was for the prisoner to prove that Mary and Samuel Soper had committed perjury, and they wondered what had suddenly excited the members of the legal profession who were in the court.

"According to her own evidence, Mary Smith received a letter of introduction to the matron of the London Fever Hospital, and Mrs. Soper presented this. She did more than present the paper: she lived under the name of Mary Smith for five-and-twenty years. The marriage register says that Mary Smith was married to Philip Thompson; and that, gentlemen of the jury, was the marriage Samuel Soper witnessed. My brother read an account of the inquest in the newspapers, and naturally supposed that his wife was dead, and he afterwards married my sister-in-law.

"Now, I am not much like my brother, as Miss Lily Thompson, who was called for the Crown, has admitted; and if, gentlemen of the jury, you will kindly look at the photograph, which the same witness has sworn is a portrait of her father, you will see that for yourselves. I was stouter a month ago than I am now; but the difference in size is still considerable. Now this woman, Mary Smith, having, as she says, married me, claimed my brother as her husband. She wanted to marry him again, you have learned from her letters; and if she is not Mary Smith, she is then an impudent impostor, altogether unworthy of belief.

"I now come to my late father's will. He wrote the document himself, and Mary Smith and Samuel Soper witnessed his signature. I was present at the time, but the woman wore a thick veil, and I could not possibly identify her. Mrs. Soper swore that Mary Smith went to Romford, and saw my father; and probably she again saw him that night at

the office. It may have been in consequence of this visit that the will was then made; for Mary Smith may have made some accusations against my brother, and in consequence of this my father may have disinherited his eldest son.

"According to Samuel Soper, he and I allowed my father to die without assistance, in order that I might afterwards forge the will. Is this likely? I do not think Samuel Soper is quite as bad as he pretends to be. As yet, I believe, he has no man's blood upon his hands; and he has committed his first crime at the instigation of an immoral and unprincipled woman. He stated that my father was dead before the will was given him to sign as an attesting witness, and that he did so on an agreement that he should be taken into partnership. This tale was concocted by the wicked woman whom you have seen in the witness-box, where, without a blush upon her handsome face, she acknowledged her infamy.

"I will ask you to remember that accomplices, who levy blackmail, always increase their demands as their victims become richer. Would not Samuel Soper have required fifteen hundred a year after he had succeeded in obtaining a thousand? You, gentlemen of the jury, are men of the world; and, knowing something of human nature, will answer this question in the affirmative. Samuel Soper was once upon a time a youth of promise; but he has yielded to the fatal charms of an ensnaring siren, and I will now leave him to public obloquy.

"As to the evidence of experts, you, gentlemen of the jury, who are practical men, will know how to value that. A poorly paid writing-master will swear to anything for a valuable consideration; and I could have brought an army of scribes to swear whatever I wished, if I had not been an honourable man, with a reputation, which I am determined to maintain at any cost. You can send me to the gallows; but you can neither rob me of my conscience nor destroy my soul.

"Having now told you who they are that charge me with crime, and having exposed their tissue of falsehoods, I, who alone am able to do so, will tell you all the facts. When my brother returned from Liverpool, I saw him at the station, and he told me that he was anxious to talk matters over with me; but he made no appointment, and I understood that he would come down to Romford again at some time or other, or else see me in Bucklersbury.

"That night I was looking through some accounts, as I thought that Samuel Soper, who had robbed me of one thousand pounds by forgery, might have obtained other sums by embezzlement. In this I wronged him, and now I believe he was an innocent man until he met the woman, Mary Smith.

"The barking of a dog disturbed me, and I fetched a revolver and shot the beast. If it had not been for this unfortunate incident I should have been unarmed when my brother entered in so extraordinary a way. As it was,

when I saw him hastening towards me, I thought it was a burglar, and I fired the fatal shot.

"As to the glass, I cannot account for it. I have no doubt I could have obtained witnesses to say that the glass might have fallen without breaking, if I had tried; but I have told you the truth, and nothing more or less. As an Alderman of the City of London, it is my bounden duty to set the facts plainly before you, and urge nothing in my behalf which I do not believe to be true. The chain of circumstantial evidence may prove too strong for me to break; you may prefer to believe the evidence of an adventuress to the statement of a man of my position; but at any rate I shall not go hence with guilt upon my soul.

"Gentlemen of the jury, I have now dealt with the topics of this case to the best of my ability; and you will soon have the responsibility of finding a verdict. My brother was a good and honourable man; and if anyone had wilfully killed him, that person would certainly have deserved the punishment which the law inflicts upon murderers. The dread sentence of the law is necessary; for it has been found to deter criminals from committing the terrible crime for which alone it is inflicted. It is a great responsibility for men to be called away from their businesses, as you have been, in order to decide upon the issue of life or death; but it is a duty which we all owe to society, and I am sure you will do your best to return a just verdict. If you believe that I am guilty, I do not desire to live; I do not want to go out into the world suspected by my fellow-citizens. I would rather go hence, to appeal unto a higher and unerring tribunal."

There was loud applause as the alderman sat down in the dock; but this was at once suppressed, and the Attorney-General proceeded to reply on behalf of the Crown.

"The prisoner," the Attorney General began, "has thought it right to make an attack on Samuel Soper, and on the woman whom he misled by a promise of marriage when he was a student at Addiscombe. They have admitted circumstances which are not in their favour; and they would have scarcely have done this, if they had concocted their tale. The prisoner paid Samuel Soper a thousand a year for doing next to nothing; and Samuel Soper says the prisoner did this because the will was not duly attested. Taking all the facts into consideration, I think you may infer that the will was a forgery. In these days, uneducated youths do not become partners in large City firms whilst they are under age; and you must ask yourselves why the prisoner took Samuel Soper into partnership, and gave him a thousand a year. There is no evidence to support the suggestion that Samuel Soper was a good auctioneer; and the prisoner could easily have called witnesses to prove that Samuel Soper had conducted many auctions if this were true.

"I must now read to you the most important part of the evidence which the prisoner gave at the inquest. He said:—'The conservatory door was opened, and someone entered. The

revolver was close to me, and I took it up. I went into the conservatory, and a man came towards me. I was frightened, and without looking up I fired."

"It is certainly not probable that the deceased would have entered if he had not found the door open, and the statement of the prisoner does not account for the fact that Mr. Richard Thompson found his uncle outside the conservatory. Did the deceased take several steps backwards after he was wounded, or did the prisoner go to the door and fire at his brother, who was waiting to be admitted?"

"This, however, is the more important question—did the prisoner fire the revolver knowing that it was his brother who stood before him? The prisoner may have made an appointment with the deceased, and he may have killed the dog in order to be able to account for having the weapon at hand. It is not proved that the dog barked, and if the dog had made much noise it must have been heard by someone else, and the prisoner could have called that person as a witness."

"Philip Thompson did not wish any punishment to be inflicted upon his brother, but the public safety demands that the criminal shall suffer for his crime. I must ask you, therefore, carefully to consider the facts of the case; and when you have done this, if you have a doubt as to the guilt of the prisoner, by all means give him the benefit of it. But if you come to the conclusion that the facts, proved by creditable witnesses, are not consistent with the innocence of the prisoner, I must ask you not to shrink from the duty which will then devolve upon you."

Although it was nearly one o'clock his lordship immediately began to sum up. He said:—

"Gentlemen of the jury,—It would be a very poor compliment to you, after the patient attention which you have paid throughout this protracted and anxious trial, if I were to remind you of the very solemn nature of the duty which you are now called upon to perform. This case is a pure question of fact, and not one of law; for if the prisoner shot the deceased maliciously, then he is guilty of murder; whilst if the prisoner fired the shot supposing that a burglar had entered his house and was about to attack him, then he has committed no crime. When a burglar attacks a person whose house he has feloniously entered, he is usually armed, and consequently the person attacked has a right to defend himself with any weapon he may have at hand. But if a man innocently enters a house by an open door, and does not attack the person he meets, then if that person kills the intruder without

malice or premeditation, he commits the crime of manslaughter; malice or premeditation would make the crime that of murder."

"Did the prisoner know before he fired the shot that it was his brother who stood before him? If he did know, he committed murder. The deceased was weak and ill, we are told on evidence that is not disputed; and it is not likely that such a person would break into his brother's house after midnight."

"We must now consider what object, if any, the prisoner had for wishing his brother dead. If their father's will was not genuine, or if the prisoner supposed that the witness Mary Soper was his wife, and he wished it to be supposed that she was his brother's wife, then he would have such an object. Samuel Soper swears that he did not witness the signature of the testator, and that there was no woman at the office on the night when he put his signature as that of an attesting witness to that will. The experts have sworn that the will is in the

handwriting of the prisoner, that the signature of the testator was written by the prisoner with the pen, turned to the left, and that the signature of Mary Smith is a clumsy imitation of a woman's angular writing. The testimony of experts is most valuable in cases of forgery; and I have no doubt the prisoner would have availed himself of it, if he could have done so."

"Philip Thompson saw his brother at Romford station on the morning of the twelfth; and that evening, accompanied by his nephew, he went down to see the prisoner. He left Mr. Richard Thompson in the carriage, and then he entered the grounds; but whether he intended to break into the house of his brother, or

whether he went there by appointment, we can have no direct evidence to show. What the deceased may have said during the day as to his intentions is mere hearsay, and, as such, inadmissible; but we do know that he was in a weak state of health, and consequently incapable of much exertion. According to the prisoner's statement, the deceased forced his way in; and he afterwards advanced towards his brother. Supposing the statement to be correct, the deceased must have been some distance from the conservatory door when the shot was fired; but then the body was found outside the conservatory, and the doctors say that the deceased must have fallen directly after the wound had been inflicted. Still, this is only theory, and it is possible that they may be wrong. But a large piece of glass was found unbroken upon the ground, and this is certainly very strange. You have heard several witnesses say that this must have been de-



MANY A LADY OF HIGH DEGREE HAD COME TO WITNESS THE DRAMA.

liberately taken out from inside; but you must remember that this is only an opinion. It is also strange that a loaded revolver should be at hand; and the explanation which the prisoner gives is not satisfactory. There is no evidence to prove that the dog barked that night more than usual; and the only witness who spoke of the dog said that he did not hear much barking, though, for some time before the animal was shot, he was near the dog's kennel.

"These are the most important facts, and you have to consider if they are compatible with the innocence of the prisoner. You have a solemn duty to perform, for you must arrive at what you consider an honest and true conclusion from the evidence that has been given before you. If the guilt of the accused has not been proved, he is entitled to an acquittal; but if you believe that he certainly committed the crime imputed to him, it will be your duty to deliver an adverse verdict against the prisoner at the bar."

The jury retired to consider their verdict; the judge went to luncheon; and now eager faces turned towards the prisoner. The spectators in the back rows stood up to have a good view of the principal character in the drama which they had come to witness; whilst those who were on the floor of the court stood on tip-toe to see the human being who, they expected, would soon be condemned to die.

The head of the guilty man drooped, and he feared that the judge's charge would cost him his life; but people took out their provisions, their tumblers, their footless wine-glasses, and other picnic effects, and the merry audience made a hearty luncheon, enjoyed the exuberant gossip, and were troubled by no sad reflections.

The loud buzz of conversation and the shrill laughter of women were heard by the prisoner, and he was once seen to shudder when some light-hearted person spoke of the black cap. He had an interview with his solicitor in the dock, and he signed a document, which the public supposed to be a will. Then, whilst all round was excitement, bustle, and noise, a cry of "Hats off!" in the doorway by which the jury would enter produced an instantaneous hush. The judge, followed by sheriffs and aldermen, came in and took his seat; the twelve jurors passed solemnly into their places in the box, and the prisoner scanned their faces eagerly.

It was only a respite, and there was to be no verdict yet. The jury wished to ask some questions and to be supplied with a copy of that part of the prisoner's evidence at the inquest which referred to the Mary Smith who witnessed the will, and the Mary Smith whom he had known at Croydon; and when they again retired, the prisoner was also removed. After another hour had been spent in waiting for a verdict, the jury returned, and intimated that there was no possibility of their agreeing; but Mr. Justice Lawking said that he could not then dismiss them, and in answer to an inquiry of the foreman of the

jury, he told them that they could have no refreshments.

The wretched prisoner was eagerly waiting for the verdict which would either leave him free or consign him for a short period to the condemned cell, and then to the hands of the common hangman. The chaplain went to him and offered him the consolation of prayer, but the murderer was too much concerned with the things of this world to pay any attention to the words addressed to him. But the daylight passed and the night came, and then he began to hope that neither this jury, nor any other, would agree to find him guilty.

The judge allowed a police surgeon to see one of the jurors who had been taken ill. The medical man found that the juror had taken little breakfast, and that he was faint for want of food; but in consequence of the barbarous law of the land, which allows jurymen to be starved until they agree to a verdict, the surgeon could do nothing for his patient.

Three of the jurymen, besides the sick man, were doubtful as to the guilt of the prisoner, whilst eight considered that his guilt had been clearly proved. But they were all hungry, and they agreed to decide the question of life or death by lot. They cut twelve pieces of paper of equal size, and wrote "Guilty" upon eight of these and "Not Guilty" upon the other four; and they placed the papers in a hat, and the foreman drew out one of them. The jury then returned to the court, the prisoner was brought back, and the judge took his seat upon the bench.

The clerk of arraigns said: "Gentlemen of the jury, have you all agreed upon your verdict?"

The foreman replied: "We have."

The clerk of arraigns then asked: "Do you find the prisoner, William Thompson, guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty," the foreman answered.

The prisoner covered his face with his hands, and the warders who were standing by his side saved him from falling; but when the clerk of arraigns addressed him, he had regained his composure, and stood erect with folded arms.

"Prisoner at the bar," the clerk of arraigns began, "have you anything to say why the court should not give you judgment according to law?"

"My innocence is the only reason why the sentence of the law should not be passed upon me," the prisoner replied. "If I were guilty I should deserve to die; but God knows that I am innocent, and He will support me."

The chief usher demanded silence.

The judge having assumed the black cap, addressed the prisoner, and said:—

"William Thompson, the jury have convicted you of the crime of wilful murder, after having listened patiently to every argument which your ingenuity could suggest; and the law commands me to pass upon you the sentence of death. It is not my desire to aggravate your feelings by recapitulating any portion of the details of your career, and I will only say that you are certainly guilty of the cruel, base, and

treacherous crime of which you have been convicted. It is not part of my duty to admonish you how to meet your doom; but during the short term of life which still remains to you, I implore you to prepare for eternity.

"The sentence of the court upon you is that you be taken hence to the place whence you came, thence to a lawful place of execution, and that you be hanged by the neck until you be dead, and that your body be buried within the precincts of that prison in which you were

last confined after the passing of this judgment upon you. And may the Lord have mercy upon your soul!"

The chaplain, who had been standing near his lordship, said "Amen."

The men and women who had seemed heartless in the morning felt sorry for the prisoner, now that he had been condemned; but an official, who had been polite to the alderman in the morning, now without ceremony hurried away the convict under sentence of death.



AN OFFICIAL, WHO HAD BEEN POLITE TO THE ALDERMAN IN THE MORNING, NOW HURRIED AWAY THE CONVICT UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONDEMNED TO DIE.



FTER the verdict of guilty had been pronounced, City men, who had known William Thompson for years, wrote to the papers; and each mentioned some instances of the prisoner's kindness and generosity, and urged that there was not sufficient evidence to support a conviction. Persons of the highest rank who had dined with the convict, and conscientious individuals who objected to capital punishment, interested themselves in his behalf; and it was the opinion of many, that an innocent man was about to be consigned to a shameful death.

At the election of the Lord Mayor of London, the liverymen gave the prisoner a large majority of their votes; but the aldermen who had passed the chair, decided to appoint the only other candidate. This decision was not favourably received by the members of the livery companies; and several of the senior aldermen deemed it advisable to state that they were convinced of Mr. Thompson's innocence. They assured the liverymen that they would gladly have elected him, if his conviction had not vacated his seat on the board of aldermen, and rendered it impossible for him to fill any municipal office; and a petition was then drawn up by the City solicitor, and signed by every person present.

The senior member for the City introduced a deputation, which waited upon the Home Secretary; and upon this occasion many petitions were presented. But the Home Secretary had an interview with the judge, and he afterwards replied to the deputation by letter, saying that he saw no reason why the law should not take its course. Still, the friends of the ex-alderman would not accept this decision as final; and public meetings were held, and much money was spent by the City authorities, who were anxious to obtain a pardon.

Time passed all too quickly for the prisoner, and Lord Mayor's day came, and no reprieve had been received. The murderer was to die upon the morrow, and he was sitting in his cell, thinking of the dread sentence of the law. The convict had refused to see either his wife, his son, or his niece; but before Sir Jonas James joined the procession which was to start from the Guildhall, he asked the prisoner to give them an interview. The worthy knight said that the committee in the City, which was trying to obtain the prisoner's release, wished Lily and Dick to be ready to plead for mercy to the Home Secretary, if such a course should be necessary; and he told the unhappy man that the exertions of the committee might yet be crowned with success.

The prisoner's refusal to see his relations was owing to his fear that they would deem him guilty; but now that they might be of service to him, he sent for his son and his niece. Lily and Dick came, dressed in black; and

the convict resented this, thinking that the mourning was for him, and not for his brother, whom he had never deemed of any importance. He told them what he wished them to do, but neither Lily nor Dick was sanguine of success, and the young man begged his father to be prepared for the worst.

"You can plead with all your eloquence in the interests of justice and humanity, for you know that I am innocent," the condemned man said.

Neither Lily nor Dick spoke; for they did not possess the courage, with which the knowledge of the prisoner's innocence would have inspired them.

"What!" exclaimed the ex-alderman, "have my own children forsaken me? I have struggled for them. I have toiled for them, and I have made a fortune for them; but they wish me to be hanged, that they may sooner enjoy the wealth which I have accumulated for their enjoyment. O gold, you are a cursed thing, a cursed thing! If I had only laboured to win the love of God, as I have toiled to win this dross for my children's sake, He would not have left me here to die a vile death by the common hangman's hands!"

The tears rolled down the prisoner's cheeks, and he wept and swore, wishing that he had never been born in so vile a world as this, which he was so loth to leave. He cursed his son and his niece because they believed him guilty, as he knew he was; and they were silent, pitying the prisoner, and praying for him.

"Aunt is very anxious to see you, uncle William; and she, at any rate, believes that you are innocent," Lily said after a little while.

"She would only make a scene," he answered.

"Indeed, she would not. She wishes to pray with you," Lily replied.

The clock struck.

"Can prayer give me back the hour of my life that has passed?" he asked, with a ghastly smile upon his face.

She did not answer this question, but she took her uncle's hand, as a sign of her good will.

"Lily," the condemned man asked, "will you marry Dick, if they hang me?"

"Yes," she answered; "I have promised to be his wife."

"If you marry him, people will have nothing to do with you; and they will point you out to one another in the streets, as the woman who married the son of her father's murderer," the prisoner said.

"Narrow-minded people may do so," she answered, "but that will not matter to us."

"Dick," said his father, speaking in the dictatorial voice which he had often employed in the days of his prosperity, "you are not generous. If you really loved Lily, you would not marry her. The son of a man hanged by the common hangman, has no right to bring down the disgrace and ignominy under which he labours, upon the head of an innocent girl, ignorant of the world and its usages."

"I will release Lily from her promise if she wishes it," Dick answered slowly and sadly.

"I do not wish it," Lily said sorrowfully.

"Do you think a girl of spirit, like Lily, would ask you to release her from the promise she made you?" continued the convict. "Not at all; she would hold you to your promise for your own sake. She's a plucky girl, and I admire her; but as for you, sir, who would bring degradation upon her noble brow, I disown you. I cannot claim you as my son, for we Thompsons were always men of honour."

"Dick has promised to be my husband, and he will keep his word," Lily said, for she knew that her cousin would rather sacrifice his own happiness than marry and degrade the woman whom he loved. She loved him with all her heart; and, for his good, she would hold him bound by his pledged word.

"Father," said Dick, "do not try to part us. Give us your blessing, and God may help us in our endeavours to save you. Pray to Him for help, either in life or in death."

"I do not wish for help in death!" the prisoner exclaimed. "I want to live!"

"God may help you yet. Pray for His assistance in the hour of your need," Dick said solemnly.

Lily took Dick's hand, and she showed him by a sign that it was her wish that they should kneel down in prayer. The young couple did so, but the prisoner stood for some time with a proud defiant look upon his careworn face. Then the young girl repeated the words:—

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

The words gave the condemned man some hope; if their prayers were heard, he might be free; and though he had no confident belief in the truth of the Bible, he thought it was worth while to pray.

The prisoner knelt down, and when they had ceased praying, he shook hands with his son, and kissed Lily on the forehead.

"Throw yourself on your knees before the Home Secretary; plead to him; Lily, as if it were your own life or Dick's for which you asked; and don't let him leave you," he said.

"We will do our best," Lily answered.

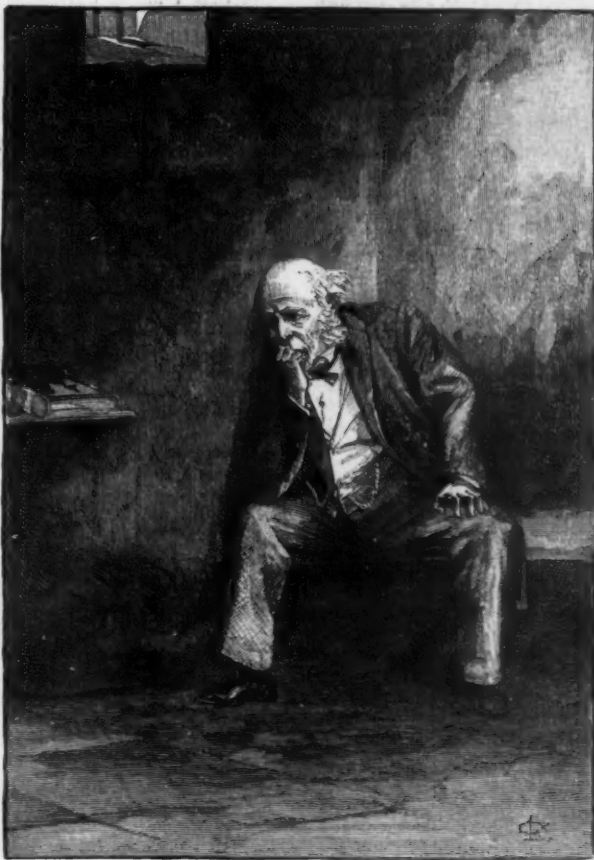
The gaoler had opened the door, and the convict said, "Good-bye, and God bless you!" But directly the door was locked, he sank back upon his seat, and began to groan.

He thought of the execution of the dread sentence of the law; and he swore, and cursed, and screamed, and then rolled grovelling on the floor.

An hour later Mrs. Thompson entered the prison, and men were then engaged in putting up the gallows. She showed the order of the sheriff, by which she was entitled to pass the night with her husband; and the gaolers allowed her to enter. She crossed the prison court with the turnkey; and this man unlocked the door of the condemned cell to admit her.

It was nearly dark, and for a little while she, poor woman, did not see her husband; and when she found him upon the floor, she had to touch him upon the shoulder to attract his attention.

"Let me alone," he moaned. "It is not time to take me away yet. Let me alone, I say. I am an alderman of the



IN THE CONDEMNED CELL.

City of London, and nobody shall murder me."

"It is I, William," she said. "I have come to see you in your trouble."

"William," she repeated in a tone made stronger by irrepressible emotion, "it is I, your wife, who have come to pray with you."

"Go and save my life," he answered, still lying on the floor. "Go and save my life: I don't want anything else done, but I cannot die like a dog."

"I cannot save you, William," she answered, "but I will stay with you, and pray with you to the end."

"Pray away," he said with a little sneer. "I have tried it; but no reprieve has come. Still, you may try your hand; but you're no saint, and I don't expect there'll be any more notice taken of your prayers than of mine."

"I was not always a bad woman, William," she answered. "When you began to beat me, I took to drink; and when I had once taken to it, I could not give it up. But you will forgive me now, William, will you not?"

"That does not matter a button to you now. I am a felon, and I cannot alter my will. You have a life interest, and I cannot take it away, do what I will. The law looks upon me as a dead man already, and it will be no legal fiction soon," he cried in despair.

"I do not want your money, William," the sorrowing wife replied. "I never asked you for the money, and I will do with it whatever you wish. I only ask you to forgive me for my past offences, and to let me pray for you."

After a momentary pause, Mrs. Thompson knelt down by her husband, and raised his head and rested it on her knees. Then their eyes met, and the face of the husband bore a look of wild despair, whilst that of the wife was full of a sad, yearning love.

"Our Father, which art in heaven, have mercy upon this poor captive, who is innocent of the crime for which he is condemned to die. Mercifully interpose, and save his life."

"Drop that," said the husband. "Pray for me as if I were guilty. Pray away, and get me the reprieve quickly, or I shall be dead with fright."

"Why should I pray for you as if you were guilty?" she asked.

There was a solemn pause.

"Good God!" she exclaimed, as the thought took possession of her mind. "You are not guilty?"

"Don't you trouble as to whether I am guilty or not guilty. They know everything up there, and there's nothing to be gained by putting in a false plea. Just pray, and save me before it is too late."

"William," she said again, "you are not guilty?"

He did not say a word, and there was a long pause; and then she wept bitterly.

"God forgive you," she said at last, when she had recovered her power of speech. "God have mercy upon your soul!"

"God spare my life," the wretch upon the ground now said. "I want time to repent. I

cannot die as I am; I dare not. Go on praying that I may live."

"God of mercy," she prayed, "give him time to repent of his sins."

"O God," he moaned, "will nobody help me? Am I to be left to die that horrible death? I am a heavy man, and my neck will not bear my weight, and they ought to take that into consideration. But they want to strike a blow at the Corporation, and they're going to hang me at the commencement of what should have been my year of office as Lord Mayor."

"I wish I might die instead of you," she said.

"I wish so, too," he replied. "But your prayers are of no good," he continued. "You see they don't send me a reprieve."

"You know that I love you, William?" she asked.

"Yes. You have been a good wife to me; and I will love you ever so much, if you will only save me."

The wife was silent. The tears ran down her cheeks, but he did not know that she was weeping; and had he known, he would not have cared.

The clock struck the hour, and he became more violent. He rolled about upon the ground, and now and then he knocked his head against the stones. He would have killed himself to save his body from the clutches of the vile executioner, if he had not lacked the necessary courage. He thought of dashing his head against the stone wall with all his might, but fear of pain prevented him from making this attempt to deprive the law of its human prey.

The chaplain of the gaol came to the condemned cell, and he told the poor wretch of the repentant thief.

The ordinary was an unaffected, orthodox Church of England divine, and he deemed it his duty to offer the condemned man the consolation of religion. But the wretched convict would not listen to the chaplain's exhortation.

"I want to live. I can't get faith in time," he muttered. "Pray that my life may be spared."

"Come, come," the clergyman said hastily to the wretched criminal, "you must prepare for death. You have no time to spare, for you are to die to-morrow morning at eight o'clock."

The miserable man rose, and uttered a blasphemous curse; and then, furious with rage and despair, he aimed a heavy blow at the divine.

The chaplain hastened away from the dangerous lunatic, and before long he was in a hansom, on his way to the Guildhall. Meanwhile, the miserable man had fallen heavily to the ground, and the blood was running down his forehead. He was foaming at the mouth, and he gnashed his teeth, and bit his tongue, as he struggled convulsively.

His wife tried to soothe and comfort him, but he struck her when she approached him. He nearly succeeded in putting his hands



"WILLIAM THOMPSON, THE HOME SECRETARY HAS CAREFULLY INVESTIGATED YOUR CASE."

round his wife's neck, and had he done so he would probably have strangled her. She screamed, when she noticed what he was trying to do; and when a warder entered the cell, she asked him to fetch a doctor.

When the prison surgeon came, he took off the convict's collar; and when the paroxysm was over, he said, "It was an epileptic fit. I cannot do anything more for him; he will be all right to-morrow morning." Then the doctor went away, and the poor woman was again alone with the wretch whose avarice had brought him to destruction. His features were livid, swollen, and distorted; and he lay there upon the ground, insensible, and doomed to die.

There had been a time, when the poor woman had deemed her husband noble, good, and true; but now she knew that his hands were stained with his brother's blood, and that he was a mean, cowardly villain, afraid to die. Still, as she heard the clock strike the hours which brought him nearer to the gallows, she prayed unto the Great Judge for mercy and forgiveness. She pleaded again and again that he might be allowed time to repent of his manifold sins and iniquities.

Her agony was so great that her mind almost succumbed under its burden; and there was scarcely any sign of life in her pallid cheeks and closed eyelids.

At last the day dawned. Then she noticed a Bible which had been left for the condemned criminal, and she opened it at a passage which inspired her with hope. She read for a little while; and then she prayed that her husband might yet repent, before it was too late. She was afraid that he would die as he was, in a

state of drowsy insensibility, caused by the fit; and she wished, oh! so much, to be able to read to him. But the clock struck again, and still he lay upon the ground.

She tried to rouse her husband; and she succeeded just before the chaplain entered the cell. The reverend gentleman exhorted the wretched convict to spend in prayer the few minutes which still remained to him; but even now the condemned man would only pray that his life might be spared.

"You must fix your hopes upon another world, whilst there is yet time," the chaplain said.

"I cannot die," the miserable wretch answered. "I must have time to repent of my sins."

The clergyman again reminded him, of the sinner who was pardoned upon the cross; and then the hangman and several officials entered the condemned cell. The wretched convict moaned and groaned.

"Do not touch me!" he exclaimed, as the hangman placed a hand upon his shoulder.

"I won't hurt you more than I can help, but I must touch you," the executioner replied, as he began to pinion the murderer.

Those who were to take part in the sad procession to the gallows, were waiting for the governor of the gaol; but when the clock had struck eight, the chaplain began to read the burial service. Then the convict fell to the ground, determined that they should drag him to the place of execution, if no reprieve came. But directly the governor had entered the cell, he asked the prisoner to rise; and the executioner lifted the prisoner from the ground.

"If there be a God in heaven," the prisoner

exclaimed, "He will save me from that devil."

"William Thompson," said the governor, "it is my duty to inform you that the Home Secretary has carefully investigated your case. After a long and patient inquiry, during which everything that could be urged in your favour was placed before him, he has come to the conclusion that there is just cause for a reasonable doubt, and in consequence of this you are pardoned."

"Thank God!" the awe-stricken man fervently exclaimed, as the governor handed him a pardon, and his wife fell, fainting, to the ground.

CHAPTER XXVII.

IN DISTRESS

MR. THOMPSON was silent for some time after he had left the prison, and he passed through a crisis of feeling almost too violent for his weakened frame to support. He remembered that he was now a dishonoured man, at any rate in the sight of the woman who had been his humble servant; and now that his life was no longer in danger, the remembrance of his confession to her caused him deep regret.

To avoid the station, where he was likely to meet many of his acquaintances, he engaged a hansom to take him and his wife to Romford; and he pulled his hat down over his forehead to hide his face. He shrank from the observation of the multitude in the street, though he knew that, sooner or later, he would have to face his fellow-men; and, sitting in anguish by the side of the woman in whose power he had placed himself, he wondered what course she would pursue. But when the cab had left behind the streets in which he was most likely to be recognised, he partially recovered from the effects of the shock which both body and mind had suffered.

"The servants will be surprised to see me, will they not, my dear?" he said, turning towards his wife, and forcing a smile.

Mrs. Thompson looked at him severely. For some weeks she had accustomed her thoughts to the possibility, that her husband might suffer the extreme penalty of the law; but during that time this loyal wife had never deemed him guilty of the crime of which he had been convicted. She had loved him for more than twenty years, and had found excuses for his faults; and now, although she knew that he was a murderer, she could not make up her mind to desert him in his distress.

"If you were not with me, my dear," he continued, "I dare say they would take me for a ghost."

"It hurts me very much to hear you speak so lightly," she answered. "God in His great mercy has given you time for repentance; but, with that weight of guilt upon your soul, you must be prepared to learn that the way of transgressors is hard."

"You, at any rate, should believe in my innocence," he exclaimed.

His wife looked at him again, and seeing his look of determination, she became aware that it was his intention to go on leading the same old life of sin. She did not reprove him, though her sense of inferiority to her companion had now altogether passed. She did not suppose that he would be able to evade disgrace, though she understood that it was his intention to pretend to be innocent; and she thought it probable that he would have to go abroad. She knew very little about foreigners, and in her mind she classed them all together as undesirable persons, who ought to be avoided by all respectable people on account of their levity and their proneness to sin.

When they reached Havering Hall, the guilty man's knees trembled, and his usually florid face was deadly pale. He offered a hand to his wife to assist her in alighting; but she thought of the murder, and shrank from him. The servants were dressed in mourning, and they had left the blinds of the house down; for, until the arrival of their master, they had supposed that the sentence of the law had been carried out. They stared at the pardoned convict, whilst Mrs. Thompson was paying the cabman; and then some congratulated him upon his escape, and some welcomed him home again, but not one of them offered him any assistance. His wife, too, stood aloof from him, though she saw that he had scarcely sufficient strength to walk without support.

Directly he was seated in the library, she hastened to her room, and locked herself in. She wanted time to become accustomed to her new position, for she was anxious to do her duty, however repugnant this might be unto her will. Her love lay dying in her heart; life with her husband, she knew, meant misery; but husband he was still, in spite of all his crimes; and her heart began to beat wildly, as, with reawakened alarm, she thought of a wife's submission to such a man. Still, to forsake such a sinner, and to leave him, unwarned, to follow his evil ways, was a course which did not seem justifiable to the simple, Christian woman; and she blamed herself, too, because in the past she had neither won his confidence nor guided his footsteps into the way of truth.

It was easy now for her to see what she should have done, and what she should have left undone; but it was difficult to decide what steps she should take to remedy her faults of omission and commission, and she needed time to become accustomed to her sad self-knowledge, and to prepare herself to walk steadily in the path which was now to be allotted to her in consequence of her past sins.

Meanwhile, in the library below, the murderer sat in sad perplexity. Self-contemplation was not a habit of his; but he was wont to act only on well-considered reasons, and now that he wished to win the approval of men of the world, he had carefully to weigh facts as they regarded himself, and to think how he should turn them, in order that they might offer their best side to others. He shrank from the condemnation of his fellow-men, as from a

climate to which he could not adapt himself; and he was annoyed to find that his body was weak, and that his mind lacked its usual vigour.

Whilst he was trying in vain to form some plans for his future conduct, the butler entered the library, bringing some lunch on a tray. "We are all glad to see you back, sir," the man said; but he did not seem as humble as usual, and he made his employer nervous by staring.

"I made a haffidavit, as I daresay you've 'eard say, sir," he continued. "I could not

be quite sure what I did that night, I was in such a tremor like, knowin' that there were burglars in the 'ouse; and when I considered the matter a second time, I wasn't altogether sure that I 'adn't taken that piece of glass out of the door with my own 'ands. If it were likely to fall out of itself, it was only my duty as I done; and long afterwards it came back to me, in a dream like, that I 'ad done it."

Mr. Thompson knew that the man was lying, and that the fellow believed Philip Thompson's death to have been the result of a deliberate design. He did not wish to be suspected by high or low, and he would have resented the suspicions of this lackey had he dared. But it was a better policy, he thought, to let the man dream in his favour; and pompously he said that he was gratified to hear that the servants were all glad to have him back; and he told the butler, in a lower tone, that the dreamer deserved and should receive a reward.

The proud man's sufferings were not over, for no pardon could give him back the respect of his fellow-men.

One last effort he was determined to make to recover his lost position, and when he had taken some brandy and water he was less despondent. But the day passed slowly; and then, sitting alone at the long dinner-table, he felt very wretched. He was fond of rich food and fine wines; but, though his cook had endeavoured to please him, he did not eat with his usual appetite, and, though he drank champagne of a famous vintage, the wine afforded him no pleasure.

He sat at the table a long time, however,

trying to think of the future; but his mind was not clear, and it was a relief to him, when his solicitor was announced.

"I am very glad to see you again," Mr. Jones said, laying some emphasis on the last word; and though this reference to his escape displeased Mr. Thompson, he did not think it wise to show resentment.

"My innocence and the approbation of mankind supported me, whilst I was passing through this terrible ordeal; and now that I am about to take my place again as an alderman of the City of London, I feel very grateful to my fellow

citizens who rallied round me in the time of my distress." In the hope that he might thereby more easily convince the solicitor of his sincerity, the auctioneer spoke magniloquently, and every now and then he waved his right hand, as he was wont to do when addressing a public assembly; but he was in a state of nervous perturbation, caused by bodily infirmity, and his voice lacked its usual vigour.

"Even if a man has been acquitted by a jury, some persons will shake their heads



SHE WAS ANXIOUS TO DO HER DUTY, HOWEVER RELUGANT THIS MIGHT BE UNTO HER WILL.

wisely, as if they could say something, if they only would," the solicitor answered. "They won't be convinced against their wills; and many persons like to think that some great man has committed crimes, of which they never would have been guilty. Of course, I must admit that the evidence is against us; and only you can know the truth. But I do wish neither of us had ever heard the name of Soper; and, between ourselves, I may say that I've been blamed for obtaining affidavits from the witnesses who gave evidence against you at the trial. People remark that this course wasn't in accordance with professional etiquette; and I can't say that I'd like to make this case a precedent. But if I had not persuaded your butler and Mrs. Soper to modify their statements, you would have been hanged, and there wouldn't have been much etiquette about that."

"No one shall blame you, Jones, I will answer for it," the auctioneer said, trying to speak boldly. "I will stand by you; and it shall be known that you saved an innocent man, when he stood at the foot of the gallows."

"I may as well tell you what has happened," the solicitor answered sharply; for he was not well pleased with the patronising tone of the man, whom he believed to be guilty of a cruel murder.

The auctioneer asked the solicitor what he would take; and when each had some brandy and water before him, Mr. Jones continued:—

"Soon after your conviction, the son of one of the executors of your father's will of 1853, who had a small interest in proving that document, gave us notice that he required us to obtain probate in grand form of the later will, under which you are sole legatee. This we cannot refuse to do; and your wife, acting as executrix under the will you signed in the dock, agreed not to deal with your estate until the Court of Probate gives its decision. In order to obtain probate, in grand form, of the will upon which we rely, it will be necessary to place one attesting witness in the box; and though Samuel Soper is a hostile witness, we shall be bound to call him. What weight will be given to his evidence, I cannot say; but if the decision is against us, the will of 1853 will be admitted to probate."

"Why, that would mean ruin!" the auctioneer exclaimed. "But they cannot do that, unless they convict me of forgery!"

"Miss Lily Thompson is unwilling to take criminal proceedings against you, and in any case it would rather be in the interest of our adversaries to prosecute you for perjury. They would have to prove less, and a verdict against you would have the same result."

"Virtue and perseverance must in the end be victorious over slander and the iniquities of men," the auctioneer said with a sneer on his pallid face.

"The executor's son, Miss Thompson, and Mr. Richard Thompson, are all innocent of crime; and unless we can prove that the will,

upon which we depend, was duly attested by Samuel Soper and Mary Smith, the Court will be against us. Popular feeling has already turned; for, though you were deemed a martyr whilst you were under sentence of death, there are a good many persons who think that you should not have got off scot free."

"I prayed that my innocence might be established, and I have triumphed over my enemies," Mr. Thompson replied. The words were what might have been expected from him, but he did not speak with his wonted energy.

"All we have done is to raise a reasonable doubt as to the justice of the verdict. Certain persons raised cheers for you as the Lord Mayor's procession was passing between the Guildhall and the Law-courts, but malicious persons have come forward to declare that they were paid to do this; and it is quite possible that they did receive something for their services. At the Guildhall, after the usual toasts, your health was proposed; and the scene, which followed, I shall never forget. Glasses were clashed, some persons cheered, some tried to speak, and one facetious gentleman produced a black banner, on which there was a griffin and a skull and cross-bones. When at last silence was restored, the Home Secretary spoke. He said the judge who presided at the trial was satisfied with the verdict, and he went on to say that you ought either to be pardoned or hanged; but here he was interrupted by an uproar, and his voice became inaudible. When order was restored, he spoke of the need of a Court of Criminal Appeal, and said that it was his intention to leave the Guildhall immediately, in order that he might again consider the evidence, and listen to anything which might be urged in your behalf."

"And I know the result."

"But you do not know that the judge was called up in the night and brought from Egham; that Mr. Justice Lawking urged that the affidavits did not raise a doubt in his mind as to your guilt; and that at six o'clock this morning the governor of the gaol and the sheriff were informed by messengers that your case was still under consideration at the Home Office, and that the sentence was not to be executed until a final message was despatched. I was up all night, and at ten minutes to eight I was told that you were pardoned."

"What would you advise me to do now?" the auctioneer asked.

"If I were you, I should retire to Boulogne. You must agree to the terms accepted by Mrs. Thompson, and then I do not think anyone will prosecute you for perjury or forgery. Our opponents have a good case, and do not wish to harass you; but I would let you know if it should seem advisable for you to go further away for the benefit of your health."

"I am an alderman of the City of London, and you of all men should not deem me guilty," the auctioneer replied angrily.

"I am not certain about your being an alderman, but I am sure that my advice is sound. I think you will have to seek re-election, if you

still wish to represent the ward of Cheap; and if you are wise you will not run the risk of rejection. People are asking already why a rich man should escape with impunity, when a poor labourer or artisan would certainly have been hanged; and it is not the custom of the Home Office to pardon criminals when the doubt as to the justice of the verdict is so slight, even though the convict is either innocent or deserving of death. The law is logical, but practice is not; and if your sentence had been commuted to penal servitude for life, few persons would have complained."

"I am an innocent and injured man," the murderer answered. He had risen from his chair, and he looked upwards, as if he wished to summon a divine witness to the truth.

"I have brought some papers relating to the criminal trial, the pistol, and some other articles which were returned to me by the police to-day. If you are really innocent of all crime, I advise you to stay and risk the result; but, for my own part, I have little hope. Good, evening."

The auctioneer took up the pistol. He knew now that his reputation was lost, though his life was spared; and a chill seemed to pass from his heart and to extend to all his frame. Courage he had none; and he feared that the insult he had just suffered, was only a foretaste of coming bitterness.

Presently he heard his wife's footstep outside, and he immediately determined to try to win her compassion. He grasped the pistol, but he did not look up when she entered. She saw him in his misery, and pity and tenderness immediately flowed from her gentle heart. She could not bear to see him bending low his guilty head; and putting a hand upon his shoulder, she said, solemnly yet kindly,

"William, let us both begin life again, and together."

He raised his eyes, and watched her sadly; he saw that she had been weeping, and he found it easy now to shed a tear; and he took her hand, and held it for a little while.

"You must give up all this money, William," she continued slowly. "My income is small in comparison with what yours was, but my money was honestly come by, and it is enough for us both."

Mr. Thompson began to consider this proposal; and, in order that his wife might not

know that he was engaged in calculation, he looked hurt, and then covered his face with his hands. If he accepted the offer, he could go abroad with his wife and live in safety; but then he would have to sacrifice the esteem of his fellow-men, and to associate with foreigners, broken-down merchants, and unsuccessful swindlers. He remembered that his wife had spoken of the income as hers, and he feared that she would now insist upon having the management of this money, which was settled upon her for her sole use



"WILLIAM, LET US BOTH BEGIN LIFE AGAIN, AND TOGETHER."

and benefit, and depended upon her frail life.

"Your words prove to me that you are sincere in these strange notions which you have adopted," he said hoarsely. "I am sorry for it, and I pity you. The trials which you have suffered, and the excitement to which you have been exposed, have caused your mind to dwell upon a single idea, until at last you are unable to drive away the illusion."

"I wish I could wash away guilt," she said, looking at him piteously.

"Woman!" he exclaimed, "there is no guilt here, except yours, in deserting me in distress!"

He looked at her sorrowfully, and then glanced at the revolver expressively.

Her eyes followed his, and she saw the weapon; but she had no fear of his using it against himself.

"You do not want that," she said calmly, "and I will take care of it for you."

"I have had enough of life, and now I must die," he answered.

"No, William," she replied, "it is not true. No man can afford to waste the time allotted to him here, and you have still to work out your repentance. I am the only person who has heard your confession, and I shall not betray you; but you must give up your ill-gotten wealth, and humble yourself before God."

"If you leave me now, every one will know that you think me guilty," he urged. "You promised to love, honour, and obey me, and you will not desert me now in my distress."

"No, William," she answered, "I will not desert you; but we must both begin a new life, and embrace humiliation."

"I want to be a great man, and I cannot live without pleasure," he said, bitterly.

"We can attain no great happiness by catering to our own narrow pleasures," she answered. "We cannot all be great, and those, perhaps, are not the greatest who are held in the highest esteem. You are not an outcast, though you have sinned, for God will rejoice at your repentance; and I, your wife, will respect you, when you are able to conquer your own selfish passions."

The auctioneer resented her tone of authority, and she thought with dread of the wifely duty which she owed to this man. Pity and fond regret had taken the place of love in her heart; she knew that there could be no real union between them, unless he would repent; and the memory of the wasted past, and thoughts of the wretched future, were a heavy burden for her to bear. She was ready to forgive her husband and to espouse his sorrow, to mourn with him and not to reproach, and to turn from evil and to seek with him the path of righteousness and repentance. But he still preferred the glory that man could bestow to the forgiveness of God; and when she left him, each understood that, though they were to sit at the same board, their hearts were to be wide asunder.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FOR BETTER OR WORSE.

THE murder of Philip Thompson was by many persons considered one of the most cruel and deliberate crimes ever committed; and the exercise of the prerogative of mercy, excited much public and private comment. Dissatisfaction was expressed at the uncertainty of the sentences of the courts of justice, and at the still greater uncertainty as to whether capital punishment would be inflicted; and it was said that there was one penalty for the rich, and another for the poor.

William Thompson, however, had been par-

doned; and he boldly reclaimed his seat on the Board of Aldermen. But he was not allowed to resume the duties of the office, and he estranged his friends without attaining his object. He then offered himself as a candidate to the electors of his old ward, and was defeated by a large majority; he refused to bind himself not to deal with his late father's estate until the trial of the action in the Probate Division of the High Court; and he told his solicitor that he would not leave London.

He made a grandiloquent speech at Exeter Hall, and promised to subscribe two hundred pounds to the fund for affording spiritual consolation to the natives of Fiji. When he announced his intention of making this munificent donation, there were deafening cheers; but many of those who had flocked to see the notorious criminal, and who had listened attentively to his moral platitudes, believed that he was guilty.

Having thus gained the goodwill of a considerable part of his audience, he referred to the trial through which he had passed; and he boasted that, in answer to his prayers, a special providence had intervened to save him from a fate which he had never deserved. There was a hostile murmur in the room, which he rightly understood to come from those who doubted his innocence; and a way occurred to him by which he might possibly convince the religious persons there assembled.

In his most solemn tone, looking upwards, and folding his hands as if in prayer, he called upon God to strike him down if he were guilty of either forgery or murder.

But he had scarcely begun this appeal, when he remembered how quickly the reprieve had followed his prayer in the condemned cell; and whilst he was speaking, his head began to ache, and a feeling of terror overcame him. He fancied he heard a hissing sound, and it seemed to him that the vast hall was filled with angry demons; he thought he saw the spirit of his brother advancing towards him, accompanied by a ghostly hangman who carried a rope; and he shrieked aloud, and then fell down, violently convulsed. He foamed at the mouth, gnashed his teeth, and bit his tongue; his eyeballs rolled, and his respiration was laborious, and his face, which had been pale as death before the paroxysm, was now flushed.

The superstitious in the audience thought that it was a judgment of God upon the sinner; and the awe-stricken assembly at once began to disperse. But in less than ten minutes the paroxysm ceased, and then a young surgeon accompanied the unfortunate man to 9, Gloucester Grove, where the patient was put to bed. In the morning, the guilty man was better; but his mental faculties were impaired, and he afterwards suffered habitually from depression.

Mr. Thompson was seriously alarmed by his physical condition; and he determined to pay a visit to Dr. Glover, the great authority on epilepsy and other chronic convulsive diseases. He had been told by his family doctor that epilepsy seldom terminated fatally, but the ex-

alderman doubted both the skill and the veracity of his physician. He found that his memory was impaired, and that his ideas were often confused; and several times a day he suffered keenly distressing sensations, which caused him more pain than the graver epileptic attacks. His body was weak, his limbs were feeble, and his gait was unsteady even when he had not been drinking; and there were many other disagreeable symptoms, which made him fear that the great specialist would pronounce him incurable.

When he arrived at the house, he was shown into the waiting-room, where there were several patients and physicians; and he looked at some of the wretched victims of this disease, and wondered whether he would ever be like them. He noticed a man who was paralysed, and he remembered that his motor powers were generally enfeebled. Then an imbecile attracted his attention, and it seemed to him that there was something in the youth's face which was strangely and horribly familiar to him. A great dread took possession of his mind; and he feared that he would become a victim of paralysis, or, still worse, of insanity.

When Mr. Thompson was told that the doctor was ready to see him, he was apprehensive of the result of the interview; and he suffered a transient loss of consciousness, which, however, was without conspicuous convulsion. The attack only lasted a few seconds, but after the momentary insensibility, he suffered from palpitation of the heart, which was attended by severe pain.

Dr. Glover asked several questions, and then examined Mr. Thompson carefully. When the doctor had made his examination he looked grave; and his patient was alarmed.

"It's nothing much, is it?" Mr. Thompson asked abruptly. "My doctor told me that epilepsy was seldom fatal," he added. He was resting his elbows on his knees and his head upon his hands, and the room seemed to be going round.

"I cannot deny that this is a serious case," the doctor said slowly. "We have, I think, conclusive proof of the existence of valvular disease of the heart at a period considerably anterior to the first attack of epilepsy; and the painful sensation, which you have just experienced, is probably accounted for by the pre-existence of that diseased condition, and by the shock to the nervous system which epilepsy naturally causes."

"What is likely to be the consequence?" Mr. Thompson asked.

"There is not likely to be any immediate consequence," the doctor answered slowly, "and I think I might venture to say that your heart will probably last your time, if you will only carefully follow my advice." The doctor said this doubtfully and apologetically; for he wished Mr. Thompson to understand that there was danger, though he was anxious not to frighten his patient.

"What do you advise me to do?" Mr. Thompson asked.

"Well, you must be abstemious, and you

must not excite yourself. Quiet and rest are absolutely necessary, and I should not be doing my duty if I did not warn you that you are at present in a very regrettable condition."

The doctor wrote a prescription, and advised Mr. Thompson to return in a week, accompanied by his usual medical attendant; and then he accepted his fee, and bowed his patient out. Mr. Thompson was assisted to his carriage, and he could never afterwards recollect exactly what took place at the doctor's house. Whilst he was asking the doctor's advice, he was excited and nervous; and, when he was on his way home, he tried in vain to remember what the great specialist had said. He was afraid that he had not long to live, and he thought of all the crimes which he had committed, and for the time he truly repented of his sins.

Soon after his arrival at his town house he had another epileptic paroxysm, and this left him still less strength than before. But after giving up wine and spirits for a day, he resumed the use of them, in spite of the remonstrance of his medical attendant; and his intellect became weaker, as his physical powers decreased. His wife was with him at Grosvenor Grove, and she tried to persuade him to follow the doctor's orders; but he could not be induced to resign the source of his only pleasure.

Mrs. Thompson nursed her husband carefully; but he was no longer her master, and he yielded to the wishes of his wife and of his solicitor, and made an agreement, by which all his property was vested in trustees until the hearing of the cause. His business had fallen off, and this was now sold to the promoters of a joint-stock company; and Haverling Hall was let furnished, and Mrs. Thompson took a small house at Torrington.

The butler asked to be kept on until he could find a comfortable place.

"I don't like this law business," the man said. "It begins all right, but you never knows where it's going to end. Life's a doubtful affair enough, but you do know that it's sure to land you in the grave; whilst if you once get afloat on the law, you're on a ocean of perplexities, and you can't see no shore."

"I was pressed into it," Mr. Thompson answered.

"My uncle was pressed into the service of 'is country, and in the end 'e lost 'is 'ead, which was taken off clean by a cannon. In law one loses one's 'ead, too, but by more complicated instruments; and after all this confusion the country air will blow the legal cobwebs out of our brain. If I stay 'ere the other side will get hold of me, and they'll badger me until they make me doubtful as to whether I ever had any doubts about that painful case. Do you twig, sir?"

The butler laughed, but his master remembered with regret that he had made the fellow a handsome present soon after his liberation, and he had not the courage to send his servant away at once.

"I'm going with you, sir," the butler continued. "I'm an old servant, and I won't take my discharge. There are some gentlemen's gentlemen as would never have taken to a commercial family; but I'm not a haristocrat. I believe in that equality which will spring from the Conservative party and Tory democracy, who are, in a morganatic way, wedded to one another, as I aptly remarked to my fellow-gentlemen at the Haverin' Arms the other evenin'."

"What's the upshot of all this?" Mr. Thompson asked.

"The decoction to be drawn from this, my dear sir, is that I've taken the family for better or for worse; and I'll rally round them to protect their 'earth and 'ome in the hour of their distress. People may try to lead me away by palaver and grandiloquent verbosity; but I've sworn on your side, and I'll never desert my party, as long as I'm paid to stick to my affidavit."

"I didn't expect this devotion, and I don't know how to appreciate it," the master replied grimly.

"You didn't expect to find a British 'earth under a butler's bosom, but it's there for all that," the man answered.

"I don't know how I can repay you," Mr. Thompson gasped.

"Oh, you needn't trouble about that. In moving, there'll be hever so many trifles as you won't want to take with you," the butler replied.

The murderer did not want to have a second person near him who was certain of his guilt, but he feared everybody now, and had not the courage to set the fellow at defiance. As to the butler, he seemed puffed out with pride and elated with wine; and, as he walked away towards the servants' hall, he looked as if he could do heroic deeds, if ever the rights and privileges of his class should be attacked.

Soon after this, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson occupied a house on the hillside, whence they could look down at the pretty winding Torridge, gurgling over the stones as it speeds upon its way past green and wooded banks. Nature, however, had no charm for them; happiness had long, long gone out from the poor woman's life, and her husband now found his only consolation in drink.

The pardoned criminal tried to obtain a place in the society of this country town, and when he had made the acquaintance of the vicar, the doctor, the solicitor, and a few other persons, he persuaded his wife to give a party. Mrs. Thompson was spending a considerable part of her income in charity, and she desired to take no part in the usual pleasures and festivities. But her husband, who had nothing to do, was becoming an habitual drunkard; and she acceded to his request, in the hope that he would have less temptation to seek oblivion in vice, if he associated with some of the townspeople.

The solicitor's wife, who, on account of her pride and her claim to superior knowledge, was known as Lady Jane Grey, haughtily declined

the invitation, and this woman induced the other ladies to follow her example. She lent the numbers of the *Times* which contained the account of the alderman's trial to several persons, and she persuaded many of the townspeople that Mr. Thompson was certainly guilty. Only a few gentlemen and the doctor's wife accepted the invitation, and soon afterwards the wretched man was blackballed when he sought admission to the Conservative reading-room and the club.

Mr. Jones wrote to his client in Torrington that there was no chance of preventing probate of the earlier will, unless the witness Mary Smith could be found or identified; he stated that if the case came on for trial the judge would probably direct the public prosecutor's attention to certain unpleasant facts; and he suggested a compromise as the best means to prevent another criminal trial. To this suggestion the guilty man gladly agreed, and the greater part of his wealth was consequently abandoned; and he told his wife that all his arrangements had been frustrated by trivial incidents which could not enter into a clever man's calculations.

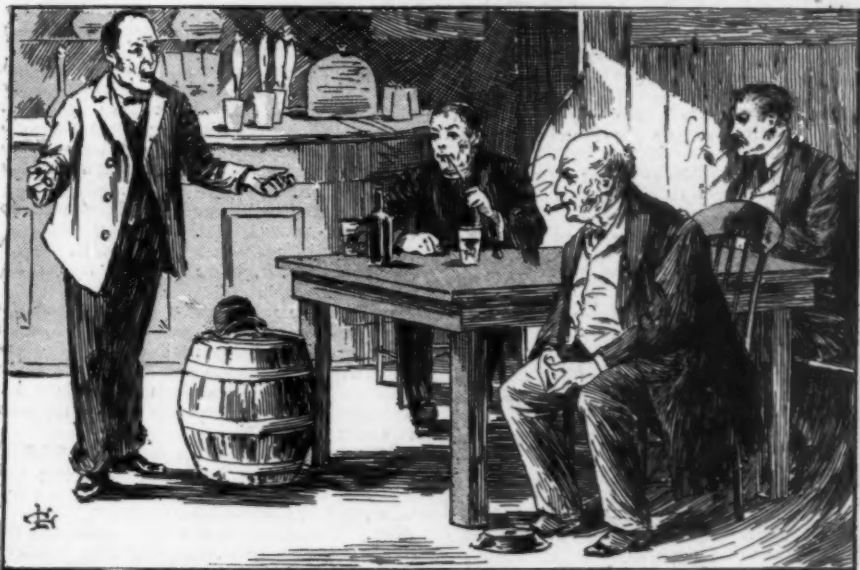
Mrs. Thompson wished to dismiss the butler, who had assumed a domineering tone, and had become the companion of her husband. But William Thompson preferred the man's society to utter loneliness; besides, when he got drunk out of doors, he wanted someone to take him home; and the butler and his master were to be seen every evening at the Rolle Arms, where the man repeated scandals about persons in the highest circles in London, and afforded amusement to the company.

After a few months of this life, William Thompson had a serious epileptic attack daily, and the minor attacks occurred several times during the twenty-four hours. He had no appetite for breakfast, and instead of taking solid food in the morning he put a little brandy into his tea; and a little later he could not walk down the street without assistance. Then the local practitioner, hoping that this warning would make the drunkard abstain from alcohol, told William Thompson that probably a violent paroxysm would some day terminate fatally. He said that the paroxysms would increase in violence, if his patient continued to drink in excess; and that the end might be indefinitely postponed, if his orders were strictly obeyed.

William Thompson was seriously alarmed, and he frightened his wife by telling her that he was about to die. He now stayed at home for a time, and let her nurse him, and he took a little beef-tea, instead of an immoderate quantity of brandy and water. Still, he had not much control over himself; and sometimes he was unable to restrain his desire for rich food and spirits.

His wife's serious face frightened him; and he hated her, because she would preach to him and remind him of death.

Until this time he had always expected to survive his wife, and he could not now bear to think of her living happily after his death.



WILLIAM THOMPSON DRANK AND SMOKED, AND DEIGNED TO BE AMUSED BY THE BUTLER.

When he was abstemious, it made him merry to think that, by taking care of himself, he was decreasing her period of freedom; and whilst he followed the physician's instructions, he spent some time every day in writing. But when the bad weather was over, he felt much better; and he was tired of the monotony of home, and laughed at his past fears.

When he reappeared at the Rolle Arms he was determined to enjoy himself. He drank and smoked, and deigned to be amused by the butler, who he now discovered could sing a good comic song. The evenings passed quickly, and when it was drawing late he always drank tumbler after tumbler of brandy and water. The spirit was very different from that which he had been accustomed to take at Romford, and when the butler took him home he could never walk without assistance. His physiognomy and bearing were now altered for the worse; his lips grew thicker, and his features became coarser; and he acquired a hideous expression of countenance. The seizures followed one another in unusually rapid succession, and he was a prey to a constantly advancing disease of the mind, which dooms its victim either to death or to complete imbecility.

Meanwhile, in Keppel Street, mourning had reigned since the death of Philip Thompson; and Lily had resigned her part, and no longer appeared upon the stage. Dick was with her; and, though he was wretched himself, he tried to comfort her. But she would not be comforted; and, for a time, the tyranny of grief usurped the place of love. She did not speak crossly to her cousin, or blame him for his father's crime; but she looked at him sadly, and he feared that his presence reminded her constantly of the past.

Love has its sufferings, and Dick became acquainted with them; but Lily had abandoned herself to grief, and it had deprived her of courage, and even of the wish for recovery. She thought often of her father and of her mother; and when she did indulge in hopes of happiness, it seemed to her that she was doing something daring and wrong. But after months had passed, though Lily wept still, she wept more tranquilly; and in time she began to look forward hopefully to their future meeting, instead of looking back regretfully at their sad parting.

Dick was trying to re-write his uncle's novel, which his father had destroyed; and Lily assisted him. In her possession there were many pages which had been re-copied; there were the outlines of the chapters and a few paragraphs of the work in note-books; and Lily remembered several of the best passages, which her father had read to her more than once. When this novel was finished, Lily proposed to go back to the stage. "It was my father's wish that I should not pass my life in idleness, Dick," she said. "I have been idle long enough, and now I must go and work, and you shall distribute my gains to the poor, as he desired."

Dick drew himself up; the crisis had come at last, and it was necessary for him to speak. Still, it was difficult to find words, and for some time he was silent, gazing fondly at the lovely face of his fair cousin.

"Lily," he said at last very gently, "there was another wish of your father's which has not been fulfilled."

"Yes, Dick," she said, and he did not know whether the words were used as a question or if she only meant to acknowledge the truth of his assertion.

"I am almost ashamed to tell you, since, if you were to marry the son of your father's murderer, many persons would consider you disgraced. But I love you, Lily, with my whole heart and with my whole soul; and whatever your answer may be, I shall love you still."

"Your father's shame is not yours, Dick," Lily answered. She was very pale, but as she spoke a blush rose upon her cheek, and the young author thought that there was not a prettier girl in the whole world.

"You are the dearest and the best of women," he said, "the best and dearest."

Innocent love flowed from her fond heart, a pure smile was on her fair face, and a glance of unutterable tenderness, sympathy, and pity, came from her blue eyes; and Dick saw these signs of love and purity, and worshipped her.

"I will do my best to make you happy, dear Lily," Dick said. He was surprised by the prospect of his happiness, and his eyes were more eloquent than his tongue.

"You have made me happy already," she answered. "It was my father's wish—but I was a silly girl—I had to wait for you to speak." The pretty pink flush spread itself over Lily's fair face, as she bent towards him; and then again she thought of the dead.

"If only my father were here now," she said sadly; and her eyes were looking absently out at the window, when the pressure of Dick's hand and his beseeching voice recalled her thoughts to her present joy.

"Your mind lingers apart from our love, my darling," he said, "and you must try to forget the cause for regret, if you would play your part well in life."

She looked at him a little while in silence, and then the sorrow vanished from her eyes, and they beamed with gladness. "I do not wish to forget my father," she replied. "But I must endeavour to remember that he is happy

now, instead of calling to mind the suffering which he endured upon earth."

"During the last few months I was afraid you had ceased to love me as a girl should love her future husband," Dick said. "And in consequence of the disgrace which the world thinks I should bear, I did not deem it right to ask you for more than a sister's kindness and affection."

The desire which poor Philip Thompson had expressed on his death-bed, had caused a reserve on Lily's part towards Dick; and for this, fortunately, there was no longer any necessity.

"There are some truths which women can never acknowledge," Lily said, "and I could not tell you that I was ready to keep the promise, which we both gave my father. But I have always loved you, Dick, from the first moment when you asked me for my love, and my heart is now all yours."

When Miss Treherne entered the room a few minutes later, the little maiden's eyes were beaming with the light of love, and Dick's face was brighter than it had been for very many days. The actress had a sudden perception of what had happened, and her kind heart rejoiced at the happiness of the young lovers, as she congratulated them heartily.

The manuscript was sent to Mr. Paternoster, and the publisher saw Dick. He said that the novel was not as good as the one which Mr. Philip Thompson had written; but he offered one hundred pounds for the copyright, and this sum Dick gladly accepted.

Soon afterwards the wedding took place; and the sun shone down upon the heads of the young couple, as they knelt at the altar. There were only a few persons in the church beside the officiating curate and the marriage party; there was no display of wealth to attract the attention of the passers-by; but Dick's "I will," was earnestly spoken, and Lily's response came fluttering up to her lips from her heart.



CHAPTER XXIX.—THE END.



anxiously watching the man whom years before she had promised to love, honour, and obey. Dick, who had arrived by the evening train, was waiting below. He had come at his mother's bidding, but he had not yet seen his father, and he was wondering whether he would be called upon to forgive or to be forgiven.

Mr. Thompson had, during the past month, become more and more irritable; and at times he had been so violent that it had been necessary to place him under restraint. During his maniacal excitement he had cursed his son, his niece, and his dead brother. He had made an attempt to kill his wife with a knife which he had concealed, and by his cries he had prevented everyone in the house from sleeping. He had explained to the doctor that the many pages of foolscap, which he had written since he had been at Torrington, were parts of his will; and he had wished to write his signature with his own blood, and to have this witnessed by two friendly demons who he said protected him from the Evil One.

Mrs. Thompson, as she sat by her husband's side, could not help thinking of the freedom which she would enjoy, if the epileptic *acme* should terminate fatally. Recovery was now hopeless, and life to the patient could only be a continuous struggle with disease. Still, she felt ashamed of herself for having wished to be a gainer by her husband's death; but though she tried, she could not truly desire that his life should be indefinitely prolonged.

There had been no epileptic attacks for three hours, but the madman was shrieking and groaning, and from his ravings it seemed that his weary brain was recalling some past scenes of his misspent life. A trained nurse, who had been several years in a hospital, had hastened away in horror and affright, and two strong men were in the passage outside the room, ready to restrain the patient if he should again become a dangerous lunatic.

Mrs. Thompson was weak with watching and weeping, but she would not yield either to the entreaties of others or to her own desire to

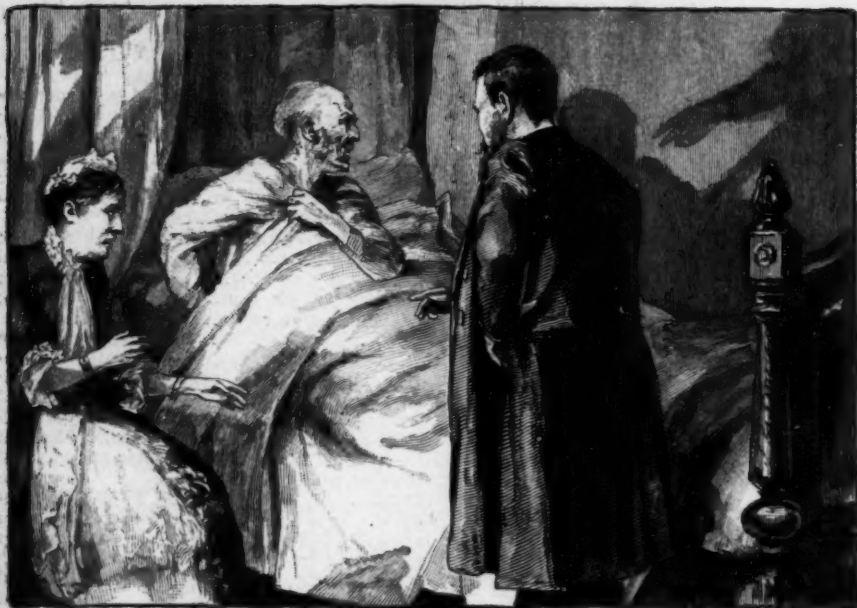
leave the room. Her love was dead, but she was determined to do what she deemed her duty. She was nervous and excited; and she thought that taking the place of the hired nurse, was some atonement for refusing the love which she owed to the vile murderer who was her husband.

The fire had now become a glowing mass; the shaded lamp lit up a narrow circle, and left the rest of the room in sombre gloom; and the patient was quieter, and the doctor was bending over him.

Mrs. Thompson saw the grotesque figure on the wall, which looked black and threatening. It startled her at first; but she soon saw that it was only the doctor's shadow. She looked at her husband, and she saw him raise himself a little in bed and gaze at the wall. Then, as the doctor put out his hand, it seemed to her that the larger shadow was about to seize the smaller, but more distinct form of the murderer. She tried to restrain herself, but in spite of her endeavours she could not help uttering a little cry of alarm. Her husband repeated this, and he began a maniacal struggle with an imaginary foe, which lasted until death put an end to the contest. Then



MRS. THOMPSON THREW THE PAPER INTO THE FIRE.



THE GROTESQUE SHADOW ON THE WALL SEEMED ABOUT TO SEIZE THAT OF THE DYING MAN.

the doctor took from under the pillow a packet addressed to Mrs. Thompson, and led the widow from the room; and when Dick saw his mother's face, he knew that there was something else upon its flight besides the wind and the clouds.

"Dick," she said, when the doctor had left them, "I believe there was a time when your father never thought of anything cruel or base; but he wished to accumulate great wealth, and he longed to gain the approbation of others. He did not mind what steps he took to raise himself above his fellows, and he was guilty of falsehood and crime; but though he sinned thus in order to escape from poverty and obscurity, he failed in his endeavours. What temptations he suffered we cannot tell; what we, who have committed many sins and have omitted many duties, would have done in his place, we cannot say; and so we should not judge him."

Dick did not answer; he pitied his mother, but he had already judged and condemned the dead. He waited a little while, and then he advised his mother to go to bed. But Mrs. Thompson had never asked her husband how much of what had been said against him was true, and how much was false; and she was hoping to learn that he had not been as guilty as she had deemed him. She told her son that she wished to read the contents of the packet, and then she showed him to his room.

Mrs. Thompson soon returned to the library; and she at once opened the packet, which contained a will written, though not signed, by the deceased. But it was no ordinary will

which the poor woman had before her; and when she had turned over several pages, she knew that her husband had written this paper in order to become notorious for his infamy, since he could not become famous for his good deeds.

The crimes which the murderer had committed were set forth plainly; and though he did state that he left all his property to charitable purposes in order to atone in some measure for the evil which he had done, yet he seemed proud of his guilt, for he boasted that he had broken every commandment more than once.

According to his statement, he forged the will whilst his father lay in need of assistance; and he and Samuel Soper had left the offices, knowing that the sufferer would be certain to die, if help did not soon arrive. He said that he saw his first wife directly after her interview with his father, and that he let her leave him, knowing that she was about to commit suicide; and he acknowledged that he had deliberately planned the murder of his brother.

A deep sigh broke from his wife when she had finished reading. She feared the law, as most women do; and she did not remember, or was not aware of the fact, that the paper was of no value, as it had not been signed by the deceased. Still, she deemed it her duty to destroy the will. She hesitated a moment, and then threw the papers into the fire; and at once they began to smoulder. After a little while a small flame arose, which increased in size and strength; but it soon grew less, and then it flickered, and at last it died out—like human life.

Mrs. Thompson was shocked by this reflection, and though she was a Protestant, she prayed for the soul which had passed away. Old memories, too, came back to her mind; and they made her think of what she might have been, if she could have lived her life over again. Thought succeeded thought in quick succession, until at last she pondered on the question of the forgiveness of sins. Her husband had been very vile, and he had treated her most cruelly, and she knew not whether she could forgive him from her heart.

She took a candle in her hand, and went to the dead man's room. There the body lay, but the soul had sped to the seat of judgment; and her husband's face no longer bore the harsh look, which she had seen there so often of late. She was no hypocrite, deluding self with false arguments; and it was not easy for her to banish the bitterness from her heart. But she prayed that this strength might be given unto her; and before she left that room, she had touched the cold forehead with her lips; and she forgave, as she herself hoped to be forgiven.

Far away from the quiet town upon the hill, another woman was working out her repentance. Mrs. Soper had left the London Fever Hospital in disgrace, and she had settled with her husband in a mining village of the Black Country. It was not a pleasant place for a residence; but the nurse sought a sphere of usefulness, not a peaceful retreat. Amongst the miners she could be useful; and when she had been there a little while, the men and women always sent for her, whenever anybody was ill.

Samuel Soper, finding that by his folly he had lost a fine figure-head of a woman and the money which he had settled upon her, endeavoured to recapture both. The little man's attempt, however, was not entirely successful; for the would-be conqueror became a captive, and worked under his wife's command, whilst she spent his income for him. At first she hoped to make Samuel a preacher, and, to humour her, he declared that he had a call; but this, Mrs. Soper learned afterwards, was only from a congregation at a public-house for a comic song. In consequence of this deceit, his pocket-money was reduced; and, in her endeavour to make him of use his wife taught him how to

bandage, and how to give immediate help to the wounded.

The little man was very fond of his wife, who had forgiven him for the past; but sometimes he got drunk to show his independence, and occasionally he flirted with a miner's wife or daughter. When he was drunk, a miner carried him home; when he flirted, one of the women was sure to report the fact to the kind nurse who did so much for their comfort; and in any case the offender had to do penance. His lady-love frowned upon him; and then he said that the canker-worm was eating away at his heart, and that only by kisses could what was left of this organ be preserved from the ravages of his consumer.

Once, when it seemed that his charmer's anger could not be appeased, he threatened to commit suicide; and, having purchased a pocket-knife for sixpence from a Cheap Jack, he wrote a last dying farewell, and then felt the edge of the weapon. But a drop of blood came, and drove all his courage away; and he went to



MRS. SOPER GAVE SAMUEL A BOX ON THE EARS AS A COUNTER-IRRITANT.

his wife for a piece of sticking-plaster, and told her what had caused the painful wound. Though she gave him a box on the ears as a counter-irritant, she did not sympathise with him in his sorrow; and after this the little man determined to bear the ills of life, as best he could. He gave up the flower in his button-hole, and became very humble; and after eighteen months of matrimony, it must be acknowledged that he presented rather a melancholy appearance.

Lily and Dick are very happy, and they live on in the house in Keppel Street. Miss Treherne is with them, and she has many pupils. Lily has appeared on the stage again, and Dick is writing essays, novels, and tales. The fortune which they have received under their grandfather's will, makes no difference to them, for they consider that they hold this money in trust for the poor. Even in the comparatively rich quarter of the town in which they dwell there are very many who suffer from want, and amongst these Lily and Dick labour.

Dick does not desire to be a great man; but he does good work, and some measure of greatness has been thrust upon him. Dick's writings have obtained for him a greater reputation and a much larger pecuniary reward than Philip Thompson ever obtained; but he thinks he would be able to do better work as a legislator than he can as a writer, and he

acknowledges that his literary ability is inferior to that which his uncle possessed. But the best men do not always draw the greatest prizes in the lottery of life; and Dick says that the critics are less severe now than they were twenty years ago.

Marriage is the beginning of a new period; it is not the end of a life's history. Lily and Dick are alive, working away amongst us; and we cannot tell what the future will bring. Miss Treherne regrets that there is not a little one to call Lily mother; Dick longs to be in Parliament, to make the rich grant justice to the poor; Lily wishes to see all men and all women happy and good; and Mrs. Thompson is looking forward to that future life in which, she trusts, all guilt may be blotted out, and all sins forgiven.

It is Christmas evening, the snow is falling fast outside, the bells ring out a merry peal, bearing unto mankind a divine message of goodwill; and Lily, Mrs. Thompson, Miss Treherne, and Dick, gather round the bright fireside, having done all they can to alleviate the sufferings of the distressed. The young couple are very happy, and they possess an affinity of nature, founded on the love of the same ideal. Lily is endowed with a great power of loving, and Dick says that his attachment is stronger than life, and lasting as death.

FINIS.





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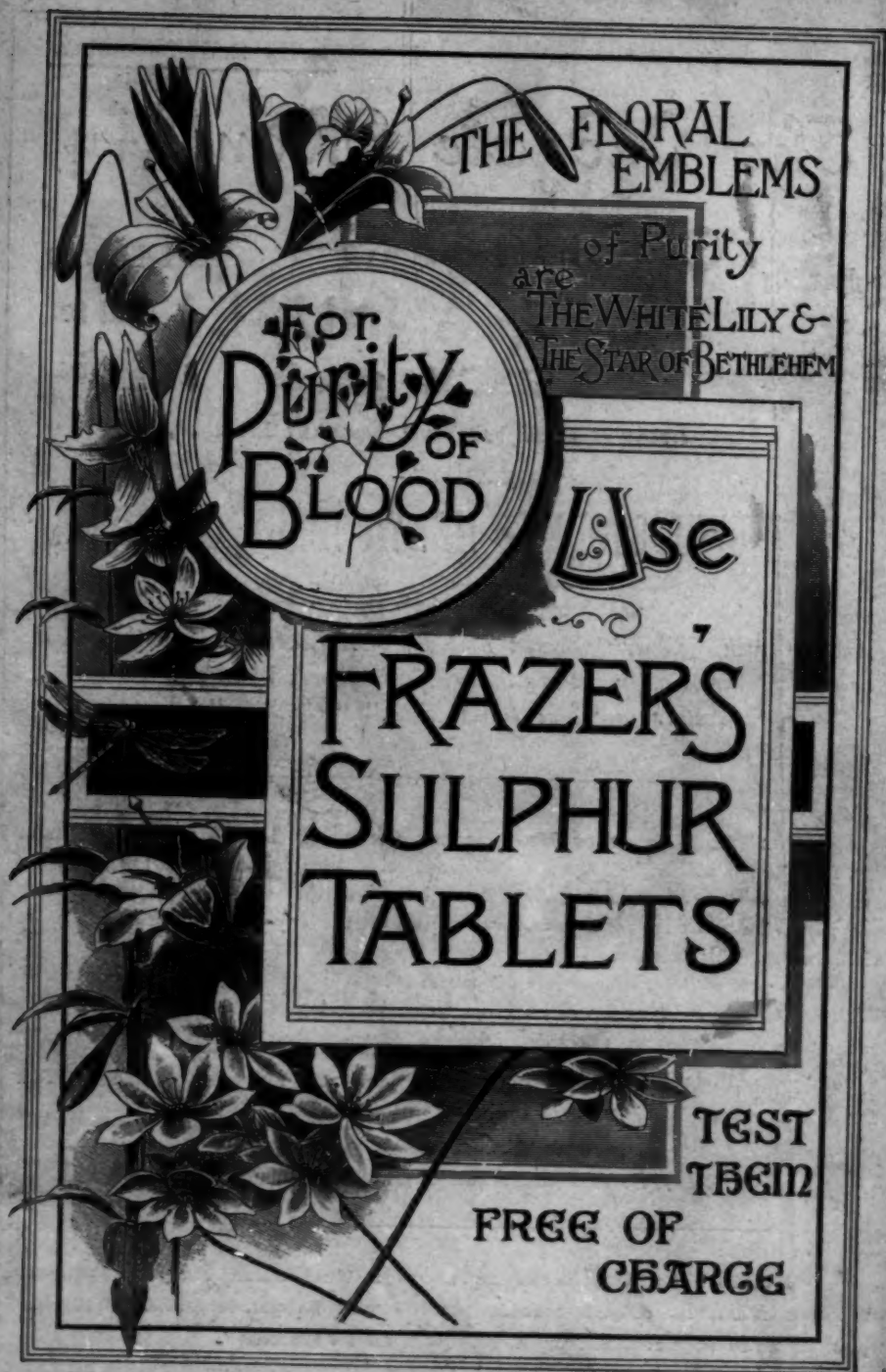
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